PEORIA PUBLIC LIBRARY
Writing or marking in this book, even for the correction of typographical errors is strictly forbidden. Any defacement or mutilation will be charged to the last borrower preceding the discovery.

SEPTEMBER, 1920 VOL. LII, NO. 1

THE BOOKMAN

IN DEFENSE OF OLD JOKES

BY JOHN KENDRICK BANGS

A SHORT while ago there appeared in several American newspapers a strip of syndicated comic pictures, by one of our most deservedly popular laugh-makers, in which the story told was of a horse that was induced as a food-saving device, by means of a pair of green spectacles placed before his eyes, to eat shavings, under the delusion that the shavings were grass. The point of the story was that just as the horse got used to this strange diet he died, so that the ingenious device of the noodle-headed inventor resulted in no economy at all, but rather in disaster. I have never been particularly interested in statistics, but I must admit that my first reaction when I found Mutt and Jeff trying to put that ancient saw over as something of their own was a curiosity to know to how many of their admirers the tale was new.

Of course no one knows what one among many is really the oldest joke in the world, but of this particular jest it may be said that it is a promising candidate for the hoariest of hoary-headed honors. It was new to me, as were most other jests, in the rollicking days of the administration of Rutherford B. Hayes, back in 1877, although I am not at all sure that the first time I laughed over it was not about the time when Seymour and Blair were running against Grant and Colfax for the presidency and vice-presidency of the United States in 1868. I came upon it later in a slightly differing form in an edition of "Joe Miller's Jest-Book", published in London in 1859, and I have a fairly distinct recollection that it formed a part of the same collection of tottering anecdotes published in 1789, the year of the adoption of the Constitution of the United States. Still later in such casual study of the humor of the ancients as I have been guilty of, I found reason to believe that it was not unknown in some one of its variants to one Hierocles, reputed to be a resident of Alexandria, who in the fifth century, A. D., in collaboration with a certain Philagrius, was the editor of a Jest-Book bearing the al-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

luring title of "Philogelos Hieraclis et Philagrii Facetiæ".

How much further back it may be traced is for others to determine, for I have neither the time, the inclination, nor the data available to prove that it was a favorite after-dinner story with Ptolemy, eased off the hours on watch of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, colored with mirth the middle-years of Methuselah, or was a jocular expedient of Adam himself in dealing with an over-voracious Diplodocus. Nor am I mentioning it in this paper for the purpose of in any way slighting either Mutt and Jeff, or their talented creator. I owe to all three of them a debt of gratitude for too many good, hearty, wholesome laughs, to be guilty of any such baseness and, moreover, I wish to record that in Bud Fisher's treatment of my gray-haired, not to say bald-headed, old friend of long-gone days, I found the tale at its best. For to the amusing features of the original story was added the exquisite drollery of the two most eminent exponents of the noodle humor of a day when we find noodle humor everywhere—in art, in literature, in economics, and, let it be said with bated breath, even in the deliberations of Congress itself. It is not the origin and development of this particular jest that I am interested in so much as in the real values of old jokes in an age too ready to frown upon the things of the past, and to philander with new things, and to prate of their superiority, not because they really are superior but merely because they happen to be new.

Mr. Fisher has abundant and distinguished precedent for clothing old ideas in a new dress. My lamented friend F. Hopkinson Smith did not hesitate to use in his Colonel Carter sketches a negro variant of a story of Boccaccio, and he did it so beautifully well that he has made the story peculiarly his own. Virgil was not too enamored of mere freshness of theme to hesitate to use such material as Homer had used with tolerable success at a much earlier period; and as for the Dean of Letters in the realm of the Immortals, William Shakespeare, the great dramatist, seized upon everything that came his way, old or new, and made thereby a fairly acceptable name for himself. And why not? We are using every day of our lives the same old sun that Adam used, and getting a lot of light and genial warmth out of it,—more perhaps than Adam got himself. There is nothing particularly new about the Ten Commandments. Indeed they are several thousand years old, but they are still in use in some households in our own and other lands, and in some others where they are not in use the households would be much improved if they were. So it is with the old jests and, be it recorded, the older and riper and mellower they are, the more entitled are they to our esteem, for do not the fittest survive? In the case of the antique saw almost more than anything else it is its intrinsic excellence that has made it more enduring than the empire of the Cæsars, or the glory that was Greece, and that holds it today more serviceable to mankind than its probable contemporaries, the Pyramids and the Sphinx.

Nor is it necessarily a sign that one has purloined the work of another when one perpetrates an old joke. Jokes are as capable of rebirth as is the human spirit. Your renaissance is not the exclusive property of art or religion, and may belong to humor as well as to architecture. When we come upon an ancient friend like the green-spectacled horse nibbling away

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at his mess of shavings, it does not necessarily mean that the corpus has been resurrected. It may mean that a jest old enough to die has in reality truly died and been reborn, thereby becoming comforting evidence of life after death. Our late ambassador to the Court of St. James, the Honorable Joseph Hodges Choate, whom Dr. Johnson would have described as not only a Wit among Lords, but a Lord among Wits, probably never knew when he asked his pompous visitor, reluctant to take a proffered chair, *to take two chairs,* that the Baron de Rothschild had said precisely the same thing to another pompous visitor at his office in Paris as far back as 1844. When our valuable contemporary "Life" some years ago printed a picture of an Irishman who, lying in a gutter whither he had been tossed by a speeding automobile, calls back to the chauffeur (who asks him why he doesn't get out of the way), "Begorry, yez ain't comin' back, are ye?" its editors were doubtless wholly unaware of the fact that back in Athens, centuries ago, when a careless carpenter —having knocked Diogenes down with a beam carried on his shoulder— called out, "Take care!" the sage retorted, "What? Are you going to hit me again?" And even if they had been aware of it, they would have been perfectly justified in the use of the variant since, while the jest was old, its application was new and more than pertinent to a present everyday experience. So with our venerable friend London "Punch", a vastly more valuable publication than most Americans brought up to sneer at English humor realize. If "Punch" prints a jest which "one would rather have left unsaid" in which a guest at a reception, speaking to a stranger standing at his side says—in effect, for I am quoting from memory:

"Who is that gawky looking woman standing over by the door?"

"That is my sister," replies the stranger.

"O I don't mean that one," says the embarrassed guest. "I mean that overdressed scarecrow standing alongside of our hostess."

"That", says the stranger, "is my wife!",—

if, I say, London "Punch" prints that jest a million readers laugh. For it is a jest of much humor of situation, and nobody is harmed by the fact that the same incident is alleged to have occurred in the experience of Lord Chesterfield, as far back as the middle of the eighteenth century, and was duly recorded in print by the indefatigable compiler of "Joe Miller" eleven years before the end of it. Indeed not only is no harm done, but much benefit is derived from the reissue, for it is a far worthier thing to do as the editor of "Punch" has done, and make a million people laugh, than to do the things that the builders of empires have done to make even the angels weep.

Humor has at least two functions. One is to inspire merriment. The other is to provoke thought. In its best and highest use it is not an end in itself, but a means to an end, and from that point of view its age or its youth has nothing to do with its merit. A vicious new joke may be infinitely more harmful than an old one with possibly less point. What is more, new generations of men and women are coming along constantly, and just because we of the day before yesterday have rejoiced in the jests of our fathers, is no reason for holding that there is no virtue left in them, and that the children of tomorrow should

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

therefore be deprived of them. Indeed it is better that they should have them, even if they have to be fed forcibly upon them, if for no other reason than that they may come to have standards of humor whereby they may the more justly estimate the value of the output of their own day. We must never make the mistake of thinking, especially in these days of so much reading matter that nobody has the time really to read, that because we "have heard it before" therefore everybody else has. Laughter is good for us all, as provocative of health today as it was in the day when Shakespeare wrote—

> Frame your mind to mirth and merriment
> Which bars a thousand harms, and lengthens life.

What we laugh at doesn't matter so long as it is clean and wholesome, and bears no barb of malice, and by that token any instrument of mirth that comes to hand should be welcome, whether it belong to the age of Pericles or to that of Josephus Daniels.

I believe it was Cicero who said, "As I approve of the youth that has something of the old man in him, so am I no less pleased with an old man that has something of the youth." So may it be said of the joke. If in spite of its age it can still manifest some of the "carrying on" qualities of youth, and fall upon some ears as joyously new and fresh as though it were born today, so much the more reason to praise, and so much the less reason to condemn it. It is a boon to those to whom it brings relief from the overtension of present difficulties, and to us who have already split our sides over it until they can split no more—even to us should it be welcome as an old friend, come back out of the forgotten past to greet us once more. We used to think that old friends and old wine were better than the new—I am quite sure the old wines were, having recently tried some of the newer brews and vintages that belong rather to denatural than to natural history—and while there is no reason why a man should be so uxoriously inclined toward the older jests that he cannot even flirt with the new, there is equally no reason why we should cast them into outer darkness.

Just one more aspect of the defense of old jokes and I am done. It has to do with the old joke in its higher function as a sort of *agent provocateur* of thought. I am not sure that in this respect the old joke is not better than the new, for it has some of the authority of the past to back it up in its suggestions as to saner courses. For instance, one cannot read Professor Paley's little volume on Greek wit for five minutes without finding a half-dozen jests of ancient make that might serve as beacon lights in present-day darkness. Suppose we try the experiment. Taking up the little repository of Hellenic scintillance we find the following on the very first page:

> Xanthippe, the wife of Socrates, being reluctant to put on her husband's mantle to go and see a procession, was thus rebuked by him: "What you are going for is not to see, but to be seen."

This is more than pertinent in a time like the present when the High Cost O'Flivvin' is keeping many an anxious father of a sartorially ambitious family awake o' nights, and its age is certainly not a day under two thousand three hundred and fifty years! A little further along we find a jest twenty-two hundred and eighty-eight years old which is almost impertinently pertinent to the domestic situation in these heydays of the culinary aristocracy.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Philip of Macedon when about to encamp upon a beautiful spot, and being told that there was no fodder for the cattle, exclaimed, "What a life is ours if we are bound to live for the convenience of Asses!"

Turning a few pages we come upon this:

Two persons requested Archidamus to act as Arbitrator in a quarrel. "Will you swear to abide by my decision?" he asked. On their assent under oath, he replied, "Then I adjudge that you shall not leave this Temple until you have made friends!"

What a wealth of suggestion lies in the wit of this Spartan king of twenty-four centuries ago for a writer on the relations of capital and labor in these days of their estrangement!

But it is in the noodle humor of these bygone days that we find a more pronounced quality of merriment combined with reactions of serious thought, far removed from thought as the jests themselves appear to be. For example we read of certain men of Abdera who wished to punish a runaway ass for having upset a jar of oil. To make his punishment all the more severe *they gathered all the other asses in town together, and flogged the delinquent ass before their eyes!* Again we are told of the citizens of Cumæ who, expecting a visit from a famous traveler and having only one bath available for his use in all the town, filled that with fresh water. And in order that at least half the water might be kept fresh for his exclusive use, *they placed an iron grating across its middle!* Another tale tells of an unfortunate individual who possessed a jug filled with wine. The jug unhappily leaked, and when most of the wine had gone a friend advised the owner to look and see if there was not a hole in the bottom of the jug. "But", protested the latter, "it is not the wine in the bottom of the jug that's gone, but that at the top!"

All very foolish, and all very properly classed as noodle humor, but how worthy of revival in a day of noodle art, of noodle literature, of noodle statecraft, and especially of noodle economics! A large appreciation of the noodle humor of the ancients among the Russians would have sounded the knell of Bolshevism the moment it essayed to establish the rule of Boobocracy from Dan to Beersheba. Only the other day the Bolshevik expropriators of a great Russian industry needing steel, instead of going to the original sources of supply actually tore up their railway tracks, and tore down their telegraph and telephone wires, to get it! Had they been trained to laugh at noodles they would have done nothing so foolish. Only the other day in France a six ton truck was sent from Hargicourt to Montdidier, a distance of many miles, *to carry a lock!* A good dose of the noodle humor of ten or fifteen centuries ago, liberally and continuously administered, would have prevented such foolish waste.

No, the old joke is not to be deplored, but rather to be welcomed. As Dr. L'Estrange has so well said:

The humor which has come to us from classic times brings the life of ancient Greece and Rome near to our own firesides. It is not that of a primitive or a decaying civilization, but of one advanced and matured, resembling our own, in which density of population has brought a clashing of interests, and enlarged knowledge has produced a variety of thought upon a great multiplicity of home and foreign subjects. We can thus bridge over two thousand years, and, as it were, obtain a grasp of the Past in which we find men so like ourselves, not only in their strong emotions, but in their little conceits and vanities, and their opinions of each other.

Than this, as a guide to things to be as they ought to be, what better instrumentality of man's devising can we find?

So here's to the ancient jest! A

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

never failing source of supply in our hours of need, its springs stand ready to be dipped into day or night, thrilling with worthy laughter and, better still, shot through and through with a *tried and tested wisdom,* so sorely needed by ourselves in these days of distraction and of fear. May the dippers of our humorists who have access to these "original sources" grow longer, and yet longer again, that they may the more deeply dip!

MADAME TUSSAUD AND HER FAMOUS WAXWORKS

BY HILAIRE BELLOC

THIS is a fascinating book* and its fascination consists in two things attaching to its subject: first, that the famous collection of modeled portraits which has become a sort of national institution in England under the name of "Madame Tussaud's" has its roots in the greatest period of modern history, the French Revolution; second, in that the complete and growing record has passed through so many changes and has yet survived.

Even though the famous collection had dealt with nothing more than the main figures of the Revolution and of the great wars that followed it, it would have been a possession of permanent and lasting historical value. I am not sure that if it had so remained, stopped short at the effigies of those now long dead, it would not now receive a greater respect. It might well in that case have become something recognized as a national possession, protected and preserved by the national government. For the prolongation of the record right on into our own time, while it very greatly increases the real value of the collection as a piece of historical evidence, yet deprives it of that illusion which men cannot avoid where history is concerned: the illusion that things thoroughly passed are in some way greater and of more consequence than contemporary things.

This continuity of the great collection—so long as it is maintained with judgment in selection and without too much yielding to momentary fame—is none the less a thing to be very thankful for. Already those of us who, like the present writer, are well on into middle age, can judge how the younger generation is beginning to regard as historical these simulacra, which, when they were first modeled, seemed in our own youth insignificant because they were contemporary. To our children (who are now grown and are young men and women), Disraeli Gladstone, Bismarck—all the group that were old but living men in the 'eighties (Disraeli died at the beginning of them, Bismarck long after their close)—are what to us were Louis-Philippe, Garibaldi, Palmerston; and the process properly continued will be invaluable. We have already more than 130 years of record. There

*The Romance of Madame Tussaud's, by John Theodore Tussaud (Doran).

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is no reason why it should not extend to the two centuries.

It often happens that a thing of great value to history, a piece of evidence which we now find invaluable, has come to us by an accident, the motive of its creation not historical at all nor really connected with record. Indeed, of the bulk of historical evidence which we use today for the reconstruction of the past only a small proportion —official documents—are of the nature of deliberate records. And that proportion of evidence is on the whole the worst as material, for official documents always have a motive underlying them, and they never give one a vivid picture. The great bulk of the material with which we used to build up the past and make it live again for ourselves is accidental. And so it is with this great collection.

The motive at first was merely that of a waxwork show. The remarkable woman who created the collection did so as a matter of business. The exhibits were intended to satisfy no more than contemporary curiosity. But they have become a piece of historical evidence which increases in value with every year. Whatever you may read (and the accounts are always contradictory) of some man prominent in the past, whatever picture or sculpture you may find of him (and these are often deliberately flattering or in some other way untrue), the physical impression of him will never be so full and so exact as in the case of an effigy made by a contemporary who saw him, watched him, knew him, *and whose whole motive was exactitude in reproduction.*

Here there does indeed rise the question of the medium. You cannot conceive of a better medium than wax among all the known mediums for production of effigies of human beings. Yet it is not perfect. And it is precisely because the likeness is so great, precisely because the effect is so parallel to that of reality, that we note the minor details in which illusion is not achieved. When a man sees a bust of marble he does not expect to find illusion. The greatest portrait statuary can never be more than a symbol. But the wax effigy aims at exact reproduction. To put it in extreme terms, the ideal of the modeler in wax would be to reproduce a figure such that one knowing the original could be deceived and think he had found again his friend dead or sleeping. When a wax effigy reproduces a known and real person, especially a person whom we ourselves have come across, the discrepancy between reality and its copy is clearer. But there is this strong evidence in support of the success which modeling in wax has reached, that where we are dealing with something unknown, some imaginary person, it is possible to create, in spite of the immobility of the figure, an illusion of life. Everyone who has visited these collections will testify to that. With a person whom one has seen in the flesh the little details in which the wax does not tally with the flesh nor immobility with life, stand out clear. That is especially the case with those whose complexion is difficult to imitate. It is also the case in the attachment of the hair. And I have further noticed that the direction of the eyes makes a difference, the figure being more lifelike as a rule when the eyes are cast down or averted, than when a direct look is imitated. But it remains true that with an imaginary person, when you are free to suppose that the person had a complexion of the sort easily imitated in wax, and where you are further free to presume the pose, you can get as

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

near to reality in this medium as it is possible for human art to achieve.

Therein, then, lies the great value of this thing. It is a witness to history, and as I have said, one increasingly valuable as time proceeds.

Still it is with what is chiefly historical in this gallery of figures and *especially with the tradition of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, that we are most concerned.* And the Tussaud collection has this added interest that it sprung as it were from the revolutionary time. Its origins lay in that. Its first fame was due to an emigration from France into England, and it still remains much the best effort at physical reconstruction which we have today.

The reason is that the lady who founded this institution was not only herself a contemporary of but an actor in the principal events of that time. She came by a series of accidents into direct touch with one personality after another. She left a record of each. She was a personal and convincing witness and her work remains. She is just as much a person of the Revolution and of the Napoleonic period as any of those whom she modeled for our benefit. And that is (let us remember) of special value *in that one is in the spirit of one's time.*

The artist deliberately reconstructing a bust through plastic art is always in danger of failing through a lack of the necessary sympathy between the time in which he lives and the time in which his subject lived. The truth of this is expressed very sharply in modern attempts at reconstructing mediæval sculpture. It has been done. It is singularly successful, for instance, in the central porch of Notre Dame in Paris. But as a rule it fails. The modern man either works from a modern model, or at any rate with modern expressions and modern features at the back of his mind. One conspicuous instance occurs to me, the modern figures upon Lichfield. They are as grievously out of their supposed time as are the figures of Tennyson's "Idylls of the King". The Knights of the Round Table of Tennyson's version are the gentlemen of pegtopped trousers who were contemporary with the poet. They have been to public schools and to universities. They would be horrified at the dropping of aitches, and they have often attended at services which were fully choral. They would have called the inhabitants of the country which they visited "natives". That is what Tennyson made of Geraint and Launcelot and his odious Arthur.

I am afraid one cannot say much more for the sculptures that I have in my mind. They are dressed in mediæval armor, but the faces that look out from the helmets are the faces to be seen in the London clubs today. They are faces devoid of simplicity and strength. They are not the faces of the Middle Ages.

You have the same thing in historical painting, and that is why historical painting usually looks so ridiculous in the generation after it was made. We all know those historical paintings which our grandfathers bought and which still disfigure the larger rooms of private houses, where you have Richard I of England charging the Saracens (he, an Angevin!), his face glowing with the emotions of the football field.

Now this prime difficulty and error in pictorial and plastic record in the past you can only avoid by the advantage of contemporary work, and this is where the great value of this collection comes in. All its work is contemporary, and we can today, after an

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

interval of more than a hundred years, weigh the importance of that point. The revolutionary figures sometimes look odd to us precisely because their real aspect has been so vividly preserved. The hand that modeled Marat was a hand of Marat's age. It touched the flesh of the dead man. The eyes that received the conception reproduced by the hands, gazed upon Marat himself as he lay back dead.

And here it is convenient to introduce that essential character in the great collection—the genius of its originator.

The whole thing—its character, long tradition and establishment—is the creation of one remarkable woman, and of her we ought to have some full biography. I know of none. She has at least the rare advantage of having propagated her name justly and the thing she created is identified with her. It is not often that history acts with so little irony and with so much generosity. Her energy was much more remarkable than that of those very few women who have created and organized permanent businesses, for it was not only her judgment and initiative which created the commercial side of the collection: it was also her own talent and industry, the work of her own hands, that laid the foundation of it all. Most of the early portraits were the direct product of her skill and it is from her that the continuous tradition of the place descends. Her sons learned their art from their mother and carried it on to the third generation, which still continues it. It was she who took all the critical decisions, she who steered the fortunes of the family through the crisis of the Revolution, who determined to take the collection over to England, who conceived the idea of making it a permanent record by adding contemporaries year after year.

It is not often that one has this intimate admixture of personality with an institution, and when one gets it, it has an astonishing effect in vivifying the whole. When an institution is thus the product of a character at once highly energetic and highly individual, it is as though a living thing continued on long beyond the term of a human life. It is, in the strict and original sense of the word, "inspired". You get that quality, of course, in all literature, and in some of the corporations which remarkable men and women have founded, but very rarely in a piece of business: in an institution of affairs. Here you get it, and the more you read of the woman's life and character the more you understand the success of her effort and its vitality.

It was an astonishing life! There lies behind it the story of her uncle Curtius, a Swiss who left medical practice in the middle of the eighteenth century and took to modeling in wax. It was a taste which had grown upon him from his habit of modeling parts of the human body for the purposes of his profession. He extended it to portraits and at last he abandoned medicine for his new art. He had firmly established himself in it and had already been taken up by members of the French Royal Family who had visited Switzerland, when under their protection he left for Paris. And there his sister, Madame Grosholtz, and her child, then five or six years old, joined him. There she learned her uncle's trade and thence in her twentieth year she went to live at Versailles as a sort of companion to Madame Elizabeth, Louis XVI's sister, a girl about four years older than herself. She was the close friend and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

companion of the princess right up to the moment of the Revolution. Madame Elizabeth like her brother had a delight in manual work. With her it took the form of modeling under the guidance of Marie Grosholtz, and it was these nine years that formed the character and that remained the liveliest memory throughout all the very long life that this remarkable woman was to live.

It would be interesting to discover (I know of no such document that could tell me, but there must be some) whether the young companion whom Madame Elizabeth thus took under her protection and to whom she thus gave a unique opportunity for the observation of contemporary life, was in race German or French. Berne would seem to be the origin of the family, and the uncle's Latin name and the family name of his brother-in-law point to German origin. All his associations, on the other hand, were French, and when he came to Paris it was hardly as a foreigner. The story reads as though they were French-speaking on their arrival. Perhaps in some future edition of the work this point will be settled. It is one of considerable moment to our judgment of the art.

It was a moment when the connection between Switzerland and French society was very close. It was to Switzerland that Voltaire had retired. It was from Switzerland that the genius of Rousseau proceeded. The unfortunate Necker, with his caution and his avarice, played his great part in the early Revolution as a Swiss. To Switzerland also he went back when he had failed—and there, by the way, in his retirement we have an amusing picture of him listening to the daily recital of the news from Paris as the Revolution proceeded, wagging his head solemnly, and perpetually saying, "I told you so."

Madame de Staël, his famous daughter, whom Pitt so much desired to marry for her money, and whom Napoleon so hated, was thoroughly Swiss. She shows it in every line of her writing. She is from the heart of Geneva in her traditions and ideas.

The family coming thus to Paris were part of a general movement, and even their connection with Versailles can be paralleled. It would not have taken much, had things proceeded quietly, for Switzerland to have fallen into the orbit of the French monarchy within the next hundred years.

After these nine formative years in the continued company of Madame Elizabeth, Marie Grosholtz enters the Revolution, and the connections of the family with the origins of the great upheaval are close, curious, and of intense interest. It was, it will be remembered, the bust of Necker from the collection of Curtius then on exhibition, which the mob carried round at the beginning of the insurrection. The show of figures already well-known in Paris became the starting point for the future collection. It was because the Revolutionaries from the very beginning of the movement showed so much acquaintance with those effigies that the continuous stream of further portraits began. That is why Marie Grosholtz was sent for time after time to take a death mask, to model a famous living man, to establish what afterward became the invaluable record we still have.

From 1787-89, the preliminary years when she was already at work, right on to 1802, a matter of fifteen years, the most crowded of all history, the newly developed art went on actively without interruption. There is not, I think, in all history a parallel to so

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

astonishing and lucky a chance. It was almost as though fate had designed a reporter, or a state portraitist for the benefit of posterity. You do get the same thing now and then in the shape of a chronicler who happens to keep out of the turmoil and mark the detail of his time, but it is extremely rare and, in the case of plastic art, unique. The nearest parallel today—which may raise a smile on account of the extreme difference in time and manner—is that of Holbein's portraits of the English court. There also you get the living record marvelously preserved for future times.

It is to our advantage that the character of this foundress does not diminish in energy with the passage of time. We see her doing the work of three people all through the years of her middle age and making decision after decision upon the fortunes of her house. And while she was thus conducting with one hand the financial side of the business, with the other she was herself still modeling perpetually, and with a third and quite separate faculty she was creating a school of her own, as it were, for the continuation of the modeling after her time. If ever there was the maker of an important thing it was this woman, and if ever there was an important thing proceeding entirely from one individual, that thing is the collection which still remains to us.

There is a sort of parallel which can be drawn between Madame Tussaud and Madame Campan. Both of them have seen, and worked at, the palace of Louis XVI, under and in connection with his Queen. Both were much of an age, Madame Campan eight years senior to Madame Tussaud. Both lived on through the Revolution and the Empire, the one till 1822, the other beyond the revolutionary year of 1848. Both had something of the same strength. Both carried on the tradition of the old attachment to the Bourbons. Both have left the legend of a strong personality, the one through an effect on education in France which was deeper than has been generally recognized, the other in a more lasting manner through her plastic work.

In this connection one muses upon what would have been Madame Tussaud's fate had she continued her career in the country where it had begun, and had she not taken over the collection in its origins to England at the Peace of Amiens. I think she would have been a great figure in the France of the Restoration and of the bourgeois Monarchy. A continuous unbroken link with all the great years up to 1848 and presenting a whole gallery of the past for a new generation to witness, would have been something the French and Paris would have made much of, and a great deal that was lost on the other side of the Channel through lack of understanding would have been preserved. I mean that too many of those figures were for those who saw them in an alien atmosphere jests or shades, whereas in France they would have been an intimate part of the great national story.

This removal to England also in some degree affected the proportion of the collection and in the same degree diminished its great international value. Not that figures of international moment had not been included —the great figures are all there—but that Paris would have been a better general centre for watching and recording the moving history of the nineteenth century, than London. The Musée Grévin in Paris supplemented the Tussaud collection in England. One imagines that it would have been

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

better for history as a whole had one great collection, preferably in Paris, served for a permanent and continuous chronicle of what living men had been.

When we come to details of the personalities from the period before the Revolution to the Peace of Amiens (the foundation of the whole exhibition) we are struck, I think, by the great difference in our appreciation. Some of the figures are just what we should have thought these men would have been. Others offend us or puzzle us by what seems to us discrepancy. But we must remember that the error is in ourselves and not in the contemporary record.

Of the great historical figures Voltaire (which is the first of them) is least specially illuminated by what I may call "the Tussaud tradition". And that is because we already know pretty well all that there is to know about Voltaire. His story was a simple one, his genius obvious, not complex, and the time of life in which Madame Tussaud's uncle came to sculp him (to model his face in wax) was just at the very end, when public fame and his own great pride in himself had combined to put him into full evidence, even to the details of his daily life. It was just at the end of that life, in 1778, that Voltaire sat to Curtius, Madame Tussaud's uncle, the original founder of the whole gallery, and the tutor of his niece in her art.

It is interesting to compare the little miniature (one of several) which Curtius made—it is far more lifelike than the larger figure—with the famous Houdon. Houdon's is much the greater thing of course and the more living, but though Houdon was the greatest of portraitists by far, the greatest renderer of the human face that ever lived, there is something intimate in the little wax miniature of Curtius which no great sculptor could have given. For instance, you have here admitted, as it were, almost photographed, the domestic, insufficient quality of Voltaire's famous smile. Houdon could not help making that smile—or grin—have something heroic about it; or at any rate, great. But the Tussaud work undoubtedly shows you the thing as it actually was: as his servants and his intimates saw it.

I learn by the way from this book (I had not known it before) that Houdon had himself worked for Curtius—a considerably older man—and the connection is as curious as it is interesting. It is striking to find a record of the connection in this book, but not astonishing that it should be absent from others, for there has been no good comprehensive work on Houdon written that I can recollect. I am told that there is some German encyclopædic work or other but no proper study of the man and of his life.

Next after Voltaire we have to note side by side with the collection a small work of Curtius's own in miniature, the very striking profile of the Duke of Orleans. How it helps one to understand that base and extraordinary career! Everyone reading the story of the Revolution should concentrate upon that man's ambition, weakness, and intrigue. The origin of the whole business was his false idea (unfortunately for himself confirmed by circumstances for many years) that Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette would have no children. He came to regard himself as the heir, and the natural result was that when the first child came after so perplexing a delay (a delay the cause of which I have explained in an appendix to my own monograph on Marie Antoinette) Philippe Egalité felt himself ag-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

grieved. His grievance was illogical and unjust but it was there, and in that grievance you find no small part of the motive force that impelled the early Revolution.

The family tradition carried on by the Tussauds from the Revolution was what may be described as the "orthodox" tradition. It is the tradition which appears in this book. I am not sure that the historian can wholly agree with it.

This "orthodox" tradition is the tradition of an equable and happy society overthrown into a sort of chaos at the head of which chance scoundrels floated, each to disappear in turn, struck by a sort of anarchic doom proceeding from their fellow anarchs. The Revolution was rather a resettlement of society from a state which had become unstable to a new and more stable state, and its leaders were upon the whole, though suffering under the exaggeration from which leaders at such a time invariably suffer, men of capacity—especially on the military side. Further, those who were made responsible in popular tradition for the worst excesses were hardly the principal authors of them.

Thus, the real director of what is called the Terror was Carnot, not Robespierre. Carnot was a perfectly sane man and a genius to boot, attached to the new democratic principle, but a soldier, and working for the highly practical ends which a soldier has in view. He thought of the Terror as a piece of martial law, and it is significant that under his direction by far the greater number of those who suffered in Paris suffered through a direct breach of the temporary regulations (such as those against the export of money or communication with the enemy) which were necessary for the prosecution of the campaign.

Robespierre was not the director of the Terror at all. He was a man singularly restricted in nature, but of powerful effect in oratory in spite of his close, academic style. He was a man of complete sincerity, much too narrow in doctrine, but because he exactly expressed with more lucidity than anyone else, and with more conviction, what was the passionate creed of the time, he became for something like two years at once the idol and the symbol of the revolutionary masses. As the Terror looked like an intensive application of the Revolution, men associated it with Robespierre's name, and Robespierre, suffering from the very grave defect of vanity (common in men who reach a public position) was willing to allow the false imputation, and to enjoy the title of ruler, when he was really, in the Central Council of the Republic, singularly impotent. He paid a heavy price for that falsehood. It cost him his life and—what was worse—his reputation.

What we know positively of Robespierre's action during the Terror is that he attended the Central Council less and less frequently, and that he tried, if anything, to stop the Terror. In fact it was precisely on this account, his interference with the rigor of the martial law, that his enemies brought him to the guillotine. But, by a curious irony not uncommon in history, the death of this man who was not the leader of the Terror, and who had if anything attempted to check it, and who was put to death because he attempted to check it, caused the Terror to cease. Men had so universally (and so falsely) identified him with the extremity of the republican military regime, that when he passed it was impossible to continue it.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In the matter of Marat what I may call "the Tussaud tradition" is sounder. The man was unbalanced to the point of lunacy, and when Madame Tussaud was called in to take the impression of his face just after death, her use of the word "fiend", though exaggerated, is comprehensible. This effigy of Marat which you may see in the famous gallery and which was modeled immediately after his death—an immediate piece of historical evidence of the first value—was shown in Paris when it was completed. It is an astonishing thing to have that piece of continuity with us.

But all these death masks of the Revolution are of the highest value. There is an extraordinary dignity in the full features of the Queen, looking younger than she did in the last years of her life, and a singular and awful reality in the mask of Robespierre. I know only two representations of Robespierre which really recall the man. One is this effigy exactly modeled from the face itself after these last thirty-six hours of agony, and the other is the portrait which Greuze made of him and which is now in Lord Rosebery's collection. And of these two, of course, the death mask, though repulsive, is the more actual.

But of all these revolutionary figures, by far the most interesting to me is that of Carrier. The contrast between that strongly exact, clearly cut face and the story of Carrier's madness at Nantes, is one of the things that make one understand not only the Revolution but, in general, mankind at white heat. Here is a man who, if features mean anything, might have been some sharp, self-contained, disappointed, ironic speaker, or even poet. It is the face of a man who certainly knew his own mind, who despised other men, which is a weakness, but who followed some great idea within. It is a face human in its self-repression and exactitude. Were we familiar with it in connection with some great name of peaceable activity, were it the face of one of those who settled the Congress of Vienna, or of some monarch, or of some writer, it would be famous as an index of genius. As it is, the name—especially to those who do not know the face—suggests nothing but a mad infamy, and indiscriminate shooting and drowning in batches of the wretched Vendean prisoners. And I myself when writing thus of Carrier have a right to be balanced in my judgment for he came very near to guillotining my grandfather's father, from whom he differed in politics. And here in the case of Carrier is an excellent example of the historical value of that which I postulate as the first, much the greatest, character in a collection such as this: for had we not the bust of the living Carrier, itself almost a living thing, taken immediately after death, we should hardly have guessed what Carrier was. But the face combined with the history explains him well enough.

The story of Madame Tussaud seeking for Sanson's guillotine, or rather for one of his guillotines, after the Peace of Amiens and sending her son over to Paris to look for the man and his implements (which the executioner had pawned), and getting it at last at great cost, is characteristic of her energy and business sense. She lived at a time when the material relic was the *clou* of her collection. If today it rather detracts from the sober historical value of the figures, it remains an excellent witness to her indefatigable initiative. And so it is with the collection of Napoleonic relics, notably

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Waterloo carriage, which she secured just at the moment when it was of the greatest value to her business.

Her modeling of the dead in the revolutionary time included, by her own account, the head of the Princesse de Lamballe, when that unfortunate and rather insipid young woman (but gracious and kind) was so foolishly and so atrociously murdered. The record would seem to correspond more or less with the judgment of Michelette, and Michelette's portrait, mostly produced by chance illusion, is the best I know.

In the fate of all those men and women, but particularly in that of Madame de Lamballe, the main element of tragedy is their bewilderment. They could not conceive what cause or motive lay behind the fierce hatred which concentrated upon them. It was for them a nightmare, something irresponsible like a cataclysm of nature, and yet something human, and something that ought therefore to be explicable. Oddly enough the one person who did get a glimmer of the human motive at work was Marie Antoinette herself. It is astonishing how rapidly not only the general character but the intelligence of Marie Antoinette developed in these years. She became the true daughter of Maria Theresa—too late!

They suffered (of course) through that illusion which is the curse of publicity. They were tortured and they were killed for a label, not for their very selves. But the tragedy is increased in their case, I think, because they did not seek publicity. Your politician, often a mountebank, whose appetite is for strutting upon a stage, who loves the limelight, whose meat and drink it is to hear his name repeated perpetually by the populace, deserves what he gets. And he nearly always gets what the fates reserve for such vanities. In a greater or less degree these creators of their own label suffer in the end: at the least disappointment and neglect, at the most death. But as I have said, they deserve what comes to them. They have had their reward. It was not so with the stable hereditary publicity of the Bourbon royal family and its adherents. They could not help the light which beat upon them. They did not seek it. The absurd legends in which any public figure is necessarily clothed as with a wrap of falsehood is not one of their seeking or of their making. They suffer for those legends and for the consequences of those legends precisely after the fashion which dramatic irony demands that the victim of any great tragedy should suffer—in spite of themselves and with no understanding of how the thing came.

What could be more ridiculous than the figment of Louis XV—obese, good-natured, slow, irresolute in morals, irresolute in policy—as a tyrant? Or what could be more absurd than the fiction of a libertine Marie Antoinette? Or of a democratic Duke of Orleans? Or of a patriot Necker?

It was, I think, this element of undeserved and awfully ironic tragedy which burned into the soul of all those who had come into contact with the harmless but sometimes dignified and always splendid circle of Versailles. One of the few sincere emotions of Burke's life was, I think, the moment when he broke out into rhetoric on the fate of the Queen. This middle-class man had seen her, and the grotesque disproportion between herself and her fate moved him to real feeling. It is to his credit, for not many things that Burke said were genuine. He was an advocate taking pay from

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

people who wanted arguments and I think he would have argued just as well for better pay on the other side.

This appassionate sympathy with and support of the victims was very conspicuous in Madame Tussaud herself. And she carried it through the whole of that period when she was at first unwillingly modeling the Revolutionaries, often with disgust compelled to take the mask of a dead face, or later (she was in prison with Josephine) associated with the figures of the period of the Directorate and the Consulship.

Of those personal interviews when that handsome woman, now in middle age, was still engaged at her task of modeling and sculpture in wax, there is none of which we would rather have a full record than the modeling of Napoleon. It is mentioned in Mr. Tussaud's book only by way of quotation from a contemporary journal—the "Belle Assemblée". It would be interesting to know if there is any family record giving full details, for we have not even the date, though we have the hour of the day—six o'clock in the morning—that she first met the Emperor. He was not Emperor yet and we can fix an inferior and a superior limit easily enough, for the portrait was made at the Tuileries, after Napoleon as First Consul had gone there, and before the Peace of Amiens. It must, therefore, have fallen within a period of only just over two years: it must have been done either in 1800 or in 1801.

It is in connection with Napoleon that the shifting of values, which I have suggested took place through the transference of the collection to England, may be noted. The exhibition once fixed in London took on the English point of view and to that extent distorted a full European impression. For instance, one of the great features in the story of the collection is the visit of the Duke of Wellington to the effigy of Napoleon, and a well-known and almost famous picture was made of the incident. I am old enough to remember many people who spoke of it as though it was a most dramatic moment in the history of the nineteenth century. But no one with the full European sense would feel like that. Wellington was not the great protagonist against Napoleon. He was but one of fifty men opposed to the Emperor. The defeat of Napoleon was in Russia, and at Leipsic and at Waterloo, not at Waterloo alone, and the victors of Waterloo were Wellington and Blücher, neither of whom could have succeeded without the other.

Of the figures added to the great collection after Madame Tussaud's death, of the figures which carry on the historical record and continue to add to its value, I am sure that the one of most interest for an Englishman is that of Richard Burton. It was not (apparently) modeled directly from life. But it was modeled under the eye of Lady Burton herself, and satisfied that critic.

The inclusion of such a figure is an example of what I mean when I say that such a collection is a valuable and continuous piece of historical evidence. The greatness of Burton was missed. He was subject to a boycott due in the main to his exposure of the ritual murder at Damascus. His energetic but isolated character did not square with that of the most of his countrymen. And yet to have an Englishman so uniquely English and to have recognized what a part he was of the record of his time, shows a sure instinct.

It is here that the chief danger im-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

periling the value of the collection appears. And with that after so much praise I would conclude.

Madame Tussaud, it will be remembered, decided at some time early in the nineteenth century to make continuous additions to her collection as time went on, to keep it up to date, to make it contemporary. It was a natural decision and obviously necessary to the conduct of the thing as a business enterprise. For contemporaries will always desire to look at the portraits of those who are for any reason notorious, rather than to preserve the historical record. But save in quite exceptional times, such as that of the Revolution, which gave the collection its origin, there is always the danger of a change in values. In the first place, for a man to be notorious is not the same thing as for a man to deserve fame. His notoriety may be of the quality of fame rather than mere notoriety, and may mature into fame, and yet not be a fame of that first class which warrants an historical record. In either of these two cases there is the danger of disproportion in the collection, regarded as something of slight historical value. But that disproportion may be remedied by the removal of the figures.

The third danger attaching to the system is not remediable. It is omission, and that is what I had in my mind in the case of Burton. It is very unlikely that a man producing a series of contemporary portraits in the early part of James I's reign would have included William Shakespeare; or in the end of Victoria's reign a man so remarkable (though of course not on a great scale) as Samuel Butler. There is always a certain proportion of men in any generation with regard to whom the careful observer can say with fair certitude that posterity will require to know much more of them, and who are yet for the moment not in the public eye. Now the commercial necessities of an exhibition cannot consider these men. They are of no value to the crowd, and therein, I say, lies the danger. Let me give an example.

I do not think (I may be wrong as I am speaking in the negative of what is only a detail), I do not think that there is in the Tussaud collection any model of the great Carnot. Carnot was on the whole the most virile of all that virile revolutionary group, and he was one of the first half-dozen of those who created the modern world. In a military sense Carnot was the tutor and creator of Napoleon. But it would certainly not have occurred to any observer of popular feelings (even if Carnot had been included) at the time, especially of popular feelings with an eye to the English market, that Carnot was worth preserving. Today I think most students of history would rather have a really accurate study of Carnot than of even Robespierre.

If ever, which is possible, a collection of this sort comes under the aid or patronage of the state, the peril I speak of might in theory be removed: for the state will endow. But as things are, the peril exists. I mention it because I do sincerely regard this body of effigies not as something concerned with as ephemeral a function in the state as popular curiosity, still less as a mere commercial venture, but rather—what I have called it throughout this essay—a unique piece of historical record. And history, I take it, is the indispensable memory with which citizens should furnish themselves if they are to understand their own state and civilization.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE WRITINGS OF W. H. HUDSON

BY C. S. EVANS

W. H. HUDSON is one of those authors whom one loves so much that it is difficult to write about them. Every bookman will know what I mean. There are books that make one argumentative, books which provoke to easy comment without stirring violent disagreement, books which one can chat about, with a finger between the leaves, as it were, turning from passage to passage for the illustration of one's stream of thought. But Hudson's books are not like any of these. One does not argue with Hudson any more than one argues with a sunset or a sudden vision of larches in their spring dress of green among the pines. One does not comment upon Hudson, for when he says a thing, the thing that he says occupies the imagination to the exclusion of other thoughts. Least of all does one criticize Hudson, for criticism, applied to work like his, seems unusually ponderous and disproportionate. It is like a spectacled, scientific gentleman in a horrid black coat, gravely analyzing the movements of a child at play.

And so, although I have just finished reading Mr. Hudson's latest book, "The Book of a Naturalist", and though I have enjoyed myself with it so much that I have almost forgotten the fog, and the clammy cold, and the bare trees, and the sodden earth, yet I find myself incapable of passing on any of my enjoyment to my readers. I am reduced to the rule of thumb method of reviewing, recommended (for their reader's comfort) to beginners in the art: this is a book about so and so. It is a good book. I like it. The following are some extracts. (And then one copies out the most interesting bits to the full limit of the space available.)

There is, indeed, no better way of reviewing a book by W. H. Hudson than to quote from it. But the thought occurs to me that there may be some unfortunate people who have never read any books by this author, and who may like to know something about him. I met a man the other day who thought W. H. Hudson was the university extension lecturer of the same name, who came from somewhere in California, and wrote a book about Keats. I reflected that some well-meaning person had perhaps congratulated the Hudson who wrote "The Purple Land" and "Green Mansions" on his critical study of Keats.... Some enthusiastic tourist, perhaps, with literary predilections and a pince-nez. It was a solemn thought.

W. H. Hudson was born about seventy years ago, somewhere in the Argentine, where his father had a ranch. Anyone who is curious about the details of his early life will find them set

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

down in that beautiful fragment of autobiography "Far Away and Long Ago" (the title is itself a poem), published last year. Hudson's boyhood and youth were spent in South America, and they gave him the material for his earliest books, "El Ombu" and "The Purple Land". The last-named deals with the Banda Oriental, that vast and little known territory which lies to the east of the Uruguay River, from which it takes its geographical name. Even today, when W. H. Hudson has to some extent come into his own, "The Purple Land" is not so well known as it ought to be, and some months ago, at any rate, it was out of print. In it, among other things, you shall find one of the most perfect fairy stories ever written; the tale of Alma, who lived by the river Yi. This story, and the tale of "A Little Boy Lost", as well as the many charming sketches of childhood scattered about his other books, show that W. H. Hudson might have given us a classic of childhood. He may do it yet, for his heart is young and simple, like the heart of a child.

Galsworthy, in his preface to the American edition of "Green Mansions", calls Hudson our greatest English writer, and much as I love the man's work, the pronouncement came somewhat as a shock to me, until I realized that Galsworthy was using the word *writer* in its precise sense. He did not say *novelist* or *essayist*, but *writer*, and he meant that Hudson's writing had qualities which could be found in the work of no other man. Richard Jefferies has written charmingly about nature, and before him Gilbert White, and that rather ponderous naturalist Thoreau, whose "Walden" was the bane of my student days, because I had to study it. (Why should one study Masterpieces?) Hudson has much that is common with old Gilbert White—the same bluff simplicity, the same absorption in his subject, and the same gifts of recording the results of minute and patient observation. But Hudson is also an artist and a poet, which Gilbert White was not. Jefferies was an artist; but his work is always a little sophisticated and mannered. He was too consciously a stylist; too consciously an observer and student of nature. He was the essential town-dweller (though he was born in Wiltshire), with a nostalgia for the grass-clad downs, and he makes the soul of the reader ache with the vision of their beauty. Hudson is the child at play upon the hills, the woodman who knows the mystery of the trees, the shepherd of the downs meditating upon his sheep with a large philosophy, the pedestrian, care-free and penniless, on little known bypaths—he is anything you like that is spontaneous and unpretentious and uncritical; but he is not a professional showman of the beauties of what people who compile books about nature are wont to call The Countryside.

"Green Mansions" is a romance of the tropical forests of Guiana—a strange, almost a mystic, book, with a beauty that seems not of this world. Years ago I read it; it was the first of Hudson's books that came my way, and I think I shall never forget the impression it left behind. (One remembers books by the "atmosphere" of them long after their details are forgotten.) "Green Mansions" was like a chapter from Bates's "River Amazons", through the pages of which a fairy had tripped—a little wistful fairy, whose eyes were sad, but with rainbow wings. There was all the flavor of tropical adventure, strange

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

birds and beasts, the silence of vast forests, picturesque and inimical natives, all as complete and immaculate as if they had been produced by recipe. But "Green Mansions" was not produced by recipe. It came from a man's heart, took shape and beauty from perfect knowledge and understanding, and one who reads it is haunted ever more.

There are at least two other books about South America. There is "The Naturalist in La Plata", and there is a book of stories of which I have forgotten the name. Besides these, Hudson has written several volumes of essays about what, for the want of a better name, we must continue to call the English countryside. He has also written "British Birds"—a book which sets out to be a sort of popular introduction to ornithology, and becomes actually a series of wonderful word-pictures which one longs to learn by heart. Then there is "A Crystal Age", a book which is different from anything else this author has written, a story of the future about a man who falls asleep and wakes up a thousand years or so later, to find himself in a Utopian society. Mr. Hudson's "Utopia" is not singularly attractive. He imagines a community ordered somewhat like that of the bees, with a Queen-Mother and sterile workers. The whole book is as cold and precise as its name, written with a crystal-like clarity and the simple charm of which Hudson is a master; but it is not a book that one can love.

"Hampshire Days", "Afoot in England", and "A Shepherd's Life" are typical of Hudson's essays on scenes of English country life. They are extraordinarily rich in recorded observations of all sorts of unfamiliar common things. Not one of them contains a line of conscious "fine-writing" yet they are so finely written as to justify Mr. Galsworthy's claim that Hudson is our greatest writer. I despair of ever analyzing his charm, for the beauty of his style is not to be discovered in any definite rhythmical form. He has a sort of gracious spontaneity, a simplicity that seems almost artless, a naïveté, and he is so enthralled by his subject that he seems to have absorbed its very atmosphere. There is a passage in one of his books about the ruins of a Roman wall, behind which, one blustering spring day, the author took shelter from the wind. And there were laborers in the field on the other side. . . . and big white clouds drifted across the sky, and there were floods of sunshine alternated with gloom, and some birds were quarreling in a tree near by. Somehow or other, that passage, for me, holds the atmosphere of historical romance. It makes me think of the hands which built that wall and which now are dust, and of the hearts that were glad because the sunshine came and the birds were noisy in spring. And somewhere in "Afoot in England" there is a description of children dancing which is one of the most gracious and suggestive things in literature.

I have left myself little space to deal with the book which I set out to review, but perhaps that is just as well, for, as I said before, one can only give an adequate idea of Hudson by quoting him, and even then little bits will not do—one must quote an entire essay. So I will satisfy myself with saying that "The Book of a Naturalist" contains twenty-nine essays about all sorts of subjects, from toads to potatoes. There are four essays on snakes — "The Serpent's Tongue", "The Serpent's Strangeness", "The Bruised Serpent", and "The Serpent

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in Literature". There is an entrancing story which ought to be read aloud to every schoolchild in the country about a Discontented Squirrel who wanted to better himself by migrating (which is a habit foreign to squirrels), and who, after many vicissitudes and sufferings, found himself, to his great content, back again in his own familiar oak-tree. A story with a moral, not only for children, but for disgruntled grownups, and told with that touch of intimacy which children love.

The book is full of out-of-the-way information. I have learned from it the correct way of picking up an adder, and how to get the best flavor from a cooked potato, and how to keep the grass on a lawn in order. I have also learned why I dislike people who walk about with those little hairy dogs cuddled under their arms, and why the picturesque abandon of an untended herbaceous border leaves me unmoved, and many other spiritual things like that.

"The Book of a Naturalist" is a joy to its possessor, who can browse upon it when all other allurements fail.

A NEW FIELD OF LITERATURE

BY THOMAS L. MASSON

THE biography of any married man, considered purely from the matrimonial standpoint, has never been written. No married man would dare write it during his lifetime, and if he turned it over to a friend, there would be trouble enough for all concerned. Many prominent men have had biographies written about them, and their wives have not been spared. But generally speaking, the book has not been published until after the death of the subject. When the thing has been done at all, however, as in the case of Ruskin, Wagner, Carlyle, and Socrates, the affair has been one-sided. Few women, wives of great men, have written biographies of their husbands. It would be very interesting if Xanthippe, the wife of Socrates, could have written about some of the things he did, and from her standpoint.

What a man is, is not only what he thinks he is, but what other people think he is, based upon the sum total of his actions as they record them. What any man's wife thinks he is, considering the fact that she has him under much closer inspection than anybody else, is certainly important. Yet this side of literature has been altogether neglected.

This is, however, a severely embarrassing matter. We can certainly do nothing about the people who are gone. It is too late. We don't know what the first lady who lived with Wagner thought of him. We can imagine what Josephine may have thought of Napoleon: and yet what she said about him at any period should not be taken too seriously. It is one thing for a woman to give vent to her feelings and quite another for her to sit down

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

calmly in front of a typewriter and give her estimate of his character.

Now there are undoubtedly heartless cynics who will dismiss this whole matter as unworthy of the attention of conscientious students, on the ground that women are not qualified to give a fair opinion of their husbands. But the question is not whether such an account would be fair or accurate, but whether it would be interesting. No biography of a great man can be accurate. Boswell did as well as he could and doubtless took greater pains than any other man to set his hero right with the public. But it is necessary to read between the lines of Boswell's book to get at Johnson at all, and every time it is reread one gets a different idea. Henry Adams conceived the idea of writing about himself in the third person, and his "Education" has been one of the literary successes of the year. But what a delightful thing it would be if his grandmother could have written his grandfather up in her own way!

It is quite appalling, and in a sense disheartening, when one comes to think of it, that such an important field of literature should have been overlooked. Can the omission be remedied for the benefit of future generations?

At first blush it would seem as if this were possible, because women are more and more coming to take an equal share with men in the world's affairs. Women have already proved that they can write history and do it exceedingly well; that they can analyze character, and do it well; in short, that in the particular fields of thought in which men have hitherto been thought to be supreme, women can do the work as well. The difficulty with such an hypothesis, however, is this: that no woman who is able to write about a man as he ought to be written about by a woman, would ever marry a man who is worth while writing about. On the other hand, if men steadily decline in intelligence, as they seem to be doing, and women advance, great men will go out (as they seem to be going out), and it will then become a question whether any man will have capacity enough, in case he happens to be married to a great woman, to write about her in the way that she ought to be written about.

It will doubtless be seen from this that the whole matter is quite complicated, and we should be inclined to give it up forthwith, if it were not for the immense need for a new field in literature. Unless a new field is discovered very soon, whole hordes of writers will have to do something else —they will have to go out and make a respectable living. It is no small job for any author to do this. Few authors know how to do anything useful, and would starve if they had to. Almost any popular author can, at a pinch, drive his car about, and possibly in an acute emergency manage to get a tire off and on. But that is about as much as he knows. Few authors have even the natural intelligence or steadiness of character to keep an eight-day clock going. They will let it go until it runs down, and then get the housemaid to wind it up again. Many of them indeed have to have their wrist-watches wound up by their wives. They have to be dressed by people specially trained for the purpose: their cravats have to be tied for them, their shoes removed at night: they require special foods to keep them alive: in matters of finance they are good only as far as their fingers count. They cannot pack a trunk or even a dress-suit case with-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

out having white trailers flowing out from the ends.

Yet the opinions and the idle fancies of these men are awaited by the public with feverish expectancy, and their utterances are debated by sober people in horn glasses with obsequious solemnity. The reason for all this must be quite apparent to any close observer, for it is upon their ignorance that authors depend for a living. The proof of this lies in the fact that if a man knows a subject thoroughly and accurately, when he writes about it, he is invariably dull. The majority of people are ignorant; and to reach the majority, it is essential to be one with them. The way a thing looks is much more a source of profit than what it is; and the moving-picture star, therefore, is paid higher than the professor of mathematics.

The majority of people, however, have been fed upon the various kinds of literature until they are sated with it. It is true that the war has been a help, but it was only temporary—a sop for the multitude. On the day the armistice was signed, word went out from all the short-story centres of industries that there were to be no more stories of the war. There was wailing and gnashing of teeth in the home of many a short-story writer; strong men wept and the plots of nine months of assembling were thrown on the scrap heap. Poetry has had a slight turn for the better, writers having discovered that they could write it without rhythm or rhyme, by merely juggling a lot of words together. But this sort of thing has no lasting hold. Something must be done. For the novelist a new sex must be invented, which, even considering the possibilities of woman suffrage, seems fairly remote.

In all the lone line of literature, however, there is nothing more permanently interesting than personality, and while there are still a few great men left, the right thing to do is to get their wives to write about them.

Eve might have done it if she had had the facilities. Adam was new and green at the business; his psychology hadn't been developed; he had no complexes. He had never lost a fortune in Wall Street, nor had been loved by another woman. But he had it in him. The thing to do would have been to get him, fresh as he was, and analyze him. What we need is to get down to first principles. Our civilization is so vast we fail to recognize that, after all, it is made up of only a few elemental motives. When Adam took the apple, how simple and unadorned was his fall. Men are falling like that now every hour of the day, but the process has become so complicated that few eyes—even when equipped with horn glasses—can follow it accurately. Eve knew why he fell, and why he felt mad about it afterward, and all the monosyllabic way in which he conducted himself. What a pity that she could not have called a stenographer, and made the first literary analysis of the first man!

That the wives of great men suffer from this obstacle erected by the absurd canons of public taste, must be evident. Napoleon's valet wrote about him, but what a poor rendering that is! All the books about him would have to be rewritten, if Josephine could only put down her real opinion.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EVERY MAN HIS OWN COOK

BY MAURICE FRANCIS EGAN

IT is a curious fact that conservatism is the greatest enemy of good cookery, and an equally curious fact that when bad cookery ceases to be conservative, it becomes what the French would call *enragé*. For many years, the worst cooks in the world lived in the United States, England, and Ireland. In Scotland, cookery was always barbaric, and to this no doubt was due the regrets, in a measure, of Mary Stuart for her beautiful France, and the fearful ferocities of John Knox, whose digestion had been seriously impaired by haggis and the other doleful compounds of the cookery of the Scots, only properly to be eaten to the music of the bagpipes.

Our country, however, had less excuse for its bad cookery than either England or Scotland. In these countries, they have nothing like the wealth of material which makes almost anything good possible in the gastronomical way with us.

When we speak evil of American cookery, we must except certain kinds; and above all, the cookery of the Creoles. He who cannot spend a drowsy afternoon with the "Old Creole Cook Book" is unworthy to have read the "Physiologie du Goût" of that great master, Brillat-Savarin, which contains the most agreeable and most wise philosophy of cookery ever invented!

The "Old Creole Cook Book" is literature. It is vers libre in form. Length of line does not make poetry; but poetry is above all suggestive, and you cannot read ten pages of the "Old Creole Cook Book" without having all the poetry of France marshal itself before you in a passing vision. You visualize the famous chickens in the pot of Henry the Fourth. And his sauce Béarnaise makes you see the white plume of Navarre, and you feel again the benevolence of that great King, whose first desire was that each of his subjects should have a fowl on Sunday; and of course you pass to the Creole *pot au feu;* and then by and by you strike a glorious symphony in okra and shrimps, and are introduced to many of the products of the Far South which only the French knew how to use; and each product has its history, and each festive dish brings pictures of the old Creole days. You can read many family histories in the "Old Creole Cook Book" if you have the right kind of vision, for each feast day has its symbolical menu, and there is much room for the famous pralines of pecan and other confections! But you take an English or a Scotch cook book (by the way I don't remember ever to have seen a Scotch cook book, though I suppose one or two must exist, probably written in the language of Carlyle), and you find

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

few suggestions that will stir your imagination or start an appetite for a Barmecide banquet.

Those unhappy islanders show no powers of invention; and strange enough the Irish, whose worst enemies will at least credit them with imagination, have slavishly followed the method of cookery of the hated Saxon and have turned out even worse cooks. There is only one dish which a sensitive palate learns to relish in Ireland and that is a boiled fowl with parsley sauce, bacon, and cabbage; but one cannot live by this alone, and presented day after day it becomes as tiresome as continuous partridges. The Irish, like the English, boil their vegetables in water, and until recently these vegetables seemed to consist entirely of potatoes and cabbage,—a perfect cabbage, it must be admitted. The Irish have not even that doubtful privilege of possessing vegetable marrow, which in some parts of England is proudly pointed out as an almost exotic addition to the bill of fare!

In our country, we have begun to improve; but the conservatism which made the frying pan rampant the principal blazon on our ancestral shield seems to be running madly to the other extreme. In the South, where there are delectable dishes, which when well done are perfect, the minor hotels have become afflicted with a craze for novelty and abandoned themselves to it deliriously. Down in Mississippi, for instance—where my chance companion at breakfast one morning stirred up two soft boiled eggs in an equal amount of Worcestershire sauce—I happened to ask for an eggcup. This caused great confusion. "We always break the eggs for guests, sir," said the waiter, "but I'll call the chef." The "chef" turned out to be a very black and very fat woman, who said, in a haughty manner: "What you don't see on the menew, don't ask for." The bill of fare was decorated with French phrases and fly specks, and half a dozen dabs of substances, all of which tasted like hominy, were haughtily presented to each guest. In truth, there are no more cooks in certain parts of our country; they are all "chefs", and, while they are very surely certain to assert the dignity of labor, they are equally sure to shirk its responsibilities.

The appearance of late of a number of very good books on cookery shows that a change must be at hand. This increase would be more hopeful, if there were more of them addressed to men. It is the man of the English-speaking races to whom the most progressive books of cookery should be dedicated; and yet the only one so far, written more for men than for women, is the "Physiologie du Goût"; but the great practical world has moved too far away from the ideals of French cookery before the Revolution,—from the æsthetic and mental refinements of those little dinners which were exquisite gardens in the lives of the more cultivated of the French,—which produced the cult of the salad and made a vital question of a sauce in its relation to the other parts of a meal, and gave even the method of serving —which is really more important than most people believe—a value of real moment. We all agree that it is a good thing for every human being who wants to keep normal and plastic to have as many interests as are reasonable. The French in the old days when leisure was looked on as a necessary part of life understood this very well. Hunting was as absorbing a sport with them as the ancient game of golf was with the Scots; but the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

game of golf produced nothing except an appetite, while if one hunted the result, to the frugal French, was useless without a cook. And there were, too, the men who loved the cities, who never took exercise except when they walked; consequently they had to discover indoor sports, and so cards, cookery, and love-making became characteristically French.

Brillat-Savarin, of whom there has been no really great imitator, was a very distinguished man. He was not only at the beginning of the French Revolution a Counselor in the Court of Cassation, afterward a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor, a member of the Constitutional Assembly in 1789, an historian, a man of letters, a philosopher, a violinist (he earned his living by playing on that instrument in one of the New York theatres during the Terror), but his interest in one of his hobbies, the art of cookery, has alone kept his name alive for an admiring posterity. Naturally, he had his weaknesses; like most men of merit, he did not realize that his success lay in his knowledge of the manner of melting the ingredients of a dinner into a perfect combination; but he stakes his whole reputation on what he calls *la fondue*. If Brillat-Savarin could ever be tiresome, he is tiresome on the subject of his *fondue*. After all, it is only eggs mixed with cheese. It was a dish of Swiss origin, which appertained principally to his native place of Belley; perhaps local pride had something to do with this obsession. We find it has in the adoration of scrapple in Philadelphia, the idolatry of terrapin in Maryland, the worship of Johnny-cakes in Rhode Island, and the aristocratic position of baked beans in Boston.

The Church in France had much influence on cookery. And the institution of the *jours maigres*, Fridays and other days of abstinence, brought about those refinements of the meatless meals of which the majority of our own people learned something during the war. Spain, which has had no days of abstinence since the Crusades, has made little progress in the art of cooking, but Italy produced some very fine things through the influence of the *jours maigres*, and the convents.

The cooking of England was always rather heavy, even in the monasteries; they added very little to the methods of cooking fish; although no self-respecting monk could live decently without a fish pond,—for he had learned the difference, which our modern cooks seem to have forgotten, between living and dead fish. There are even people who have been known in New York to eat soft shelled crabs without seeing with their own eyes that the crabs were alive! Although England produced a hundred religions, it invented no new dish after the Reformation, and even hot-cross buns are said to have been invented by the Scarlet-Lady. Let us proceed, however, with Brillat-Savarin's *fondue*. "It is", our illustrious author says, "healthful, savory, appetizing, and a boon to the host who is obliged to receive unexpected guests." It was the one dish which Brillat-Savarin was sure he cooked perfectly. After long meditation, while Mr. Bulow, one of his hosts in Connecticut—who had served with Lafayette—made a monologue on the value of American liberty, he evolved a means of cooking the big wild turkey he had shot. This was in 1794. He tells us that the effect was admirable; but as he does not mention cranberry sauce we naturally have our doubts. But the *fondue!* Toward the end of the seven-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

teenth century, a certain Monseigneur Mallot was named Bishop of Belley, he tells us. Great preparations were made to receive him; "among the *entremets* shone an ample *fondue;* but —O surprise!—mistaking the *fondue* for a cream", the unfortunate Monseigneur began to eat it with a spoon instead of the traditional fork! There were concealed smiles around the table; respect chained the tongues of all the guests; but the horror would out. It reached even to the remotest frontiers of the diocese. There were a few sycophants who adopted the spoon of the unhappy prelate, but the fork triumphed and Brillat-Savarin adds that he remembers that one of his great-uncles often joyously repeated the story, emitting a great laugh when he described how the elegant Parisian Bishop of Belley had actually eaten the *fondue* with a spoon! It was like cutting an oyster or a lettuce leaf with a knife or—in the bad old days—putting sugar into the wine of Bordeaux!

Brillat-Savarin concludes his recipe for *fondue* with the admonition: "Have your best wine brought in, which must be drunk in abundance, and you will see marvels!" Alas! as they say in the novels, these marvels can hardly now be created by the *fondue* alone; and even with the assistance of Helen Watkeys Moore's "On Uncle Sam's Water Wagon", the effect of the *fondue à la Brillat-Savarin* can hardly be produced, although the volume contains five hundred recipes for "delicious drinks which can be made at home". There is no doubt about the attractiveness of this admirably arranged little book; but why does it open naturally at an "invalid drink" named "Castor-oil and Sarsaparilla"? It has an air of melancholy, though on the next page one finds a brilliant "Cranberry Cordial". No matter how appetizing the chapter on "Fruit Drinks and Cider" may seem, it can never approach the vividness and authority of the three-hundredth edition of the "Bar-tender's Guide for Making a Hundred and Fifty Cocktails"! Still, nothing that can be done without the aid of the Demon Rum is omitted. Mrs. Moore's various treatment of ginger ale and ginger shows great discrimination and a fine imagination, and her recipes for making chocolate are as satisfactory as if they were the work of a Mexican chef. There is a bewildering array of certain popular mixtures called "Sundaes" and a distinguished maple syrup which would be an ornament to any table. Mrs. Moore tries to be gay, and to give an air of festivity to her masterpiece; but even the abandon of her "Grape High-Ball" cannot restore lost illusions.

We are now coming to several great names in the art of American cooking. Whether she is Madame or Mademoiselle, Mary Green is a very distinguished person; she writes the clearest and most economical of all cook books. Bella Wilfer, who wept many tears over the complications of the "Complete British House-wife", would have found her easy reading. She has not the richness of imagination of Marion Harland, who wrote at a time when eggs were merely eggs and not objects of luxury, nor the firm magnificence of Mrs. Farmer, who cannot conceive of roast duck without real oranges. She is right, of course, but oranges are now hothouse fruit.

Men as a rule are not permitted to have an opinion about cookery; to them it must be always a thing above reason; it must be a superstition that the art is an occult gift belonging only to the gentler sex. "There! swear

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

again!" is the only reply of a self-respecting woman who makes, year after year, pie-crust of that soggy quality which one always misses in English tarts, because they have no undercrust. The ideal American is supposed to take food on faith and in charity, but without hope. Mary Green's book is written down to the weak masculine mind. It is called "Better Meals for Less Money". I have taken the trouble to ask a famous chef of my acquaintance—who is leaving this country because he cannot reach the highest points of his art without an improper amount of Sauterne and Madeira—for the best recipe for decent pastry; and he points to Mary Green's book. It is a book for all; I recommend it especially to campers out and to any bachelors who, owing to the high cost of living, are compelled to "do" light housekeeping; I have the impression, which is confirmed by competent counselors, that this is the very best book of its kind, and the most economical.

"Better Meals for Less Money" will not please the really æsthetic. Mary Green is capable of serving asparagus without regard to the color of the candle-shades; but as a guide who speaks very practically and authoritatively to livers made lonely by unsystematic cookery, Mary Green is a bright, particular star.

Cora Moore,—this method of addressing a lady is not sufficiently formal I know, but perhaps she will be kind enough to take it as a tribute of respectful affection when I say that her "Twenty-Four Little French Dinners and How to Cook and Serve Them" is a masterpiece. It would reform the American kitchen, if it could be placed in every home. It is true that Cora Moore does not corroborate the statement of Brillat-Savarin that small birds, dipped in a little salt, should be eaten with the fingers. The anxious inquirer will find no solution of this question so often asked by the over-refined. Allowing for this omission, the book is perfect; it will not do for a gift for silver weddings, for by the time of that anniversary the party of the second part has generally ceased to be open-minded on the subject of cookery, and her husband's palate has become incapable of further improvement; but every young bride should have a copy of this volume included in the trousseau. Cora Moore points out that a hundred religions and only one sauce are detrimental to the progress of a nation. She is one of the greatest reformers of the last ten years. She has studied the simple story of Columbus and the egg, and in her direct and efficient way laid her index finger on the weakest point of the household cookery in these United States,—the absence of sauces.

Democratic Americans do not care for these refinements, you may say,—you might as well assert that men do not eat sweets by the ton; but the average man is a helpless creature. He faces an overdone beefsteak, adorned with those horrible little wooden knobs out of cans called "button mushrooms", and is inarticulately unhappy; he wants something better, but he has never been taught to know what he wants. Like Tennyson's infant, he has "no language, but a cry". He really wants "sauce Béarnaise", a very simple thing which you will find on page 28 of this very precious book,—and there is the "sauce d'anchois". Who, after having tried these sauces, will endure the perpetual egg-compound with boiled cod, or the never-varying and indigestible dab of butter, touched with lemon, on fried flound-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ers? Cora Moore says truly, that the bane of American cookery is monotony. The author casts glowing rubies before us; to call them pearls might seem invidious.

In Europe, one seldom hears of any American cook books except the "Boston" and "Marion Harland". They are looked on as representing the best guides for producing dishes of "maize" and other compounds which the American savage taste sometimes demands. There used to be in a little café near the Rue de l'Arcade, a dish called *potage à la Marion Harland*, which turned out to be a dish known in the United States as "pepper-pot", and a *poire à la Wanamaker* which was supposed to have been dug out of Mrs. Farmer's famous compilation; but I have never been able to find it.

The disadvantage of Vance Thompson's "Eat and Grow Thin", which Mr. Thompson's diplomatic experience ought to have warned him against, is that you cannot offer it as a gift, although it is the one book which so many of our acquaintances badly need. I have lost two of my best friends temporarily,—one to whom I sent it on his birthday and the other who gave it to me on mine. No man wants to believe that other people think he is fat; and fancy sending it to a lady! If you cannot give away a unique and valuable book like this, what good is it? Mr. Chesterton and Mr. Cobb may admit jocosely that they are fat,—yet let anybody else say that to them seriously!

Similarly, there is no better reading in any cook book than Rebecca Oppenheimer's "Diabetic Cookery". It is clear-cut, scientific, and with a literary touch only distinguished by the Constant Reader who knows how cook books ought to be written; yet you cannot offer it as a birthday book. Why? I will answer in a parable. I once possessed a step-aunt,—she was Scotch-Irish married to a Frenchman and, like all the Scotch-Irish, very refined and sensitive; she was estranged from her husband for a long time because he presented her, on one fatal Christmas, with a book called "How to Get Rid of Tapeworms". The man meant to be kind. If Miss Oppenheimer had known this story, she might have been more tactful in her title.

In the Mid-Victorian days, Francatelli and Soyer had their partisans; today Mrs. Wilson has drawn about her a coterie of the *nouveaux* who find Marion Harland and Mrs. Farmer too conservative. "Nothing in my opinion", said an expert lady, whom I consulted on the more delicate points of this article, "will ever induce me to believe that anything can be better than Marion Harland's recipes marked with a cross." "Except *everything* in 'The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book'," retorted another lady whom I had also consulted; and this made it necessary for me to "go it alone", so I took refuge in "Caroline King's Cook Book". Once I was left, in the autumn of 1918, to assist my family deserted by the servants in a country house, in a district where nearly everybody had the influenza, including the butchers in the nearest town (Oakland, Maryland). My wife had to act as nurse, and she left me to my fate, to be both assistant cook and amateur doctor, with nothing in the house except a bottle of the New York "Sun's" cholera mixture! As to coffee, Caroline King saved me. She is one of the few authors who has a direct method; she does not say in a casual manner, "Take a percolator", when there is no percolator in the house. To hear some of these cook

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

books talk, one would think the government gave away percolators with packages of seeds. I was ordered, too, to make soup from anything I could find, and given very sketchy directions. I shall always be very grateful to Mrs. Will Low for her "French Home Cooking". Her *pot au feu* is very easy to make from scraps, but she never said that rice, used in the soup with a lavish hand for the reason that there was a lot of it, would naturally stick to the bottom of the pot. The reason for this comes no doubt instinctively to a woman; a mere man must be taught it. Mrs. Will Low deserves a place in the Hall of Fame which will no doubt one day be erected at Castle Garden in honor of Brillat-Savarin, at the opening of which the most illustrious chef in the United States—he of the Yale Club—will make the opening speech. His greatness is acknowledged by a gradually enlarging circle. But what has become of the only man who could make perfect Nesselrode Pudding? In the old days, he was at the Hotel St. Dennis, opposite Christ's Church. There is a rumor that he took refuge in the Martha Washington Hotel and has never been seen since.

For serious persons, persons of a scholarly bent—not for self-centred brides who will hang over a very different book, "A Thousand Ways to Please a Husband"—is "Meats, Poultry and Game" by the suave and learned Edouard Panchard. M. Panchard's book has no lyrical quality; it is plain prose, but if a masculine student of cookery can afford only one book, let him buy this. M. Panchard is probably of Norman blood, and therefore he never soars to the beautiful and romantic heights of Prosper Emile Seconde of Avignon, whose simplest soups are sonnets; but M. Panchard is all there; he delivers the goods! *Je vous en parie votre douce vie!*

Every house ought to be provided with "Economical Cookery" by Marion Harris Neil and "Food Facts for the Home-Maker". Mrs. Neil's illustrations are so striking that the mind of the bride cannot wander to *him* while she is in the pursuit of domestic art. And the pictures in Lucile Stimson Harvey's book of the right kinds of cuts of flesh meat are equally graphic. Even the two fanatical admirers of Marion Harland and Mrs. Farmer, supported by an idolatress of Mrs. Wilson, agree that these two are really economical, and may be understood by even the most untrained mind.

The most charming of all these books, though it leaves little to the imagination, is "The Gardener and the Cook". It is not a domestic romance with a thesis like "A Thousand Ways to Please a Husband", but it shows as no American writer could show, that a house in the country is really only part of its garden. Mrs. Yates has a predilection for *purées*, and she has a light and convincing hand with them; but she believes in the heresy that a *purée* of chestnuts should always accompany the Christmas turkey. With all their virtues, the English are always that way! One of the saddest passages in Doctor Hale's "Life of James Russell Lowell" is that in which Mrs. Lowell, when her husband was minister to the court of St. James, found with great difficulty cranberry sauce for *her* Christmas turkey. It arrived at the table several courses after the fowl had been finished, and the servants did not recognize what their mistress wanted until she asked for the *compote rouge*. Mrs. Yates on the use of the onion is positively "divine",—as

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the late M. Vatel, who was chef to the equally late Duc d'Orléans, might have said before he committed suicide when the turbot did not arrive in time.

These paragraphs are fitly called "Onion Days". You should read, too, what she says about glazed turnips; and every child in our public schools, male and female, ought to be compelled to learn by heart what she says about the making of salads. In fact, these paragraphs might be grouped together in every school reader, and put before "Curfew Shall Not Ring Tonight"; or take the place formerly occupied by "Spartacus to the Gladiators". Under the new democracy we need to introduce a more practical line of thought into our schools! Seriously, "The Gardener and the Cook" is a delightful and satisfactory little volume.

A cursory glance at "Meatless Cookery" might tempt us to imagine Maria McIlvaine Gillmore had merely undertaken to restore the usage of the *jour maigre*, in order to tickle jaded appetite surfeited with the use of flesh meats. This would be a wrong impression. Mrs. Gillmore, with the assistance of Dr. Louis Faugères Bishop, offers to the world a method of prolonging life by means of a scientifically chosen but agreeable diet. The thesis is clearly stated by Dr. Bishop and the practical examples of its effect scrupulously expressed by Mrs. Gillmore. It is written for persons who must consider the conditions of their hearts and their blood vessels. It is founded on the experiences of those who have improved their health and saved themselves from physical extinction. Dr. Bishop's preface will give hope to many who are frightened by the constant talk of heart trouble and blood pressure, and who are more agitated than ill.

Brillat-Savarin tells us that sugar was scarcely known in France as late at the reign of Louis XIII. He says that an eminent man of letters, M. Delacroix, almost wept because the price of sugar at Versailles was five francs a pound, which was more terribly extortionate than in our own day, allowing even for the present decrease in the value of money. "Ah", M. Delacroix said in a plaintive tone, "if sugar ever comes down to thirty sous, I will never drink water without sugar again!" He lived to see that day, which is a consolation to us all. History may repeat itself. Sugared water is not a necessity with us as it is with the French, but bon bons are. The Prohibitionists have not yet found a way of preventing a man by the use of sugar from making a still of his stomach; no doubt they will try. "Mary Elizabeth", in "My Candy Secrets", has, in a veritable edition de luxe, said the last word on the confection of sweets. American dinners rarely include that weird product of English taste, the "savory" after the

---

Old Creole Cook Book. The N. O. Picayune Co.

On Uncle Sam's Water Wagon. By Helen Watkeys Moore. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Better Meals for Less Money. By Mary Green. Henry Holt and Co.

Twenty-Four Little French Dinners and How to Cook and Serve Them. By Cora Moore. E. P. Dutton and Co.

Eat and Grow Thin, with a Preface by Vance Thompson. E. P. Dutton and Co.

Diabetic Cookery. By Rebecca W. Oppenheimer. E. P. Dutton and Co.

Mrs. Wilson's Cook Book. By Mary A. Wilson. J. B. Lippincott Co.

The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book. By Fannie Merritt Farmer. Little, Brown and Co.

Caroline King's Cook Book. By Caroline B. King. Little, Brown and Co.

French Home Cooking. Adapted to the use of American Households by Berthe Julienne Low. Doubleday, Page and Co.

A Thousand Ways to Please a Husband. By Louise Bennett Weaver and Helen Cowles Le Cron. A. L. Burt Co.

Meats, Poultry and Game. By M. Edouard Panchard. E. P. Dutton and Co.

Economical Cookery. By Marion Harris Neil. Little, Brown and Co.

Food Facts for the Home-Maker, By Lucile Stimson Harvey. Houghton Mifflin Co.

The Gardener and the Cook. By Lucy H. Yates. Robert M. McBride and Co.

Meatless Cookery. Compiled by Maria McIlvaine Gillmore. E. P. Dutton and Co.

My Candy Secrets. By Mary Elizabeth. Frederick A. Stokes Co.

PUBLIC LIBRARY
JUL 8 1921
PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sweets, but no American dinner is complete without bon bons, and bon bons as exquisite as possible. It has been long admitted that the United States is the only country in which perfect ices—especially those made with cream—are produced, but of late our country has led the world in the "creation" of candies. "Mary Elizabeth" leads a carnival of candies,—a saturnalia of sweets. And if you are systematic, and have a certain touch of genius, you may learn to make them yourself; but you must take pains. The simple table of contents would send Aladdin and all the heroes of the "Arabian Nights", who had to content themselves with chunks of "Turkish Delight" and peppered cream cakes, into ecstasies. It might be read as an accompaniment to a recitation of parts of Omar Khayyam or Tennyson's "Dream of Fair Women".

I have come to the dessert; there is nothing left. To turn from a careful analysis of the gaieties of the Report of the Peace Conference to the careful study of serious cook books has not been easy. At this crucial time when all men and women of foresight must prepare to be their own cooks, I feel that my task is a patriotic one; and, if I have induced only one man to pursue a course of study too much neglected, I feel that I have added something to the Humanities.

AUCTIONITIS

BY GEORGE H. SARGENT

FROM the perusal of the morning mail the booklover rises, these days, with the horrible conviction that all the rare books in the world are to be sold by auction. To be sure, there are plenty of catalogues of book-dealers in that mail, but this is no conclusive evidence that these same books will not be encountered later in the auction room, figuring as "the property of a Gentleman going abroad", "the property of a well-known collector", "the property of an old New York booklover", or "other properties". To be sure, the Gentleman, before going abroad, may have purchased the book on the dealer's catalogue, but the chances are that it went directly from the dealer's shelves to the auction room. This is an age of camouflage.

Everybody is busy getting a library ready to sell or going over the possessions of years to see what can be sent to the auction rooms. In England the pressure has been so great that the book auctioneers have continued the season of 1919-20 into the season of 1920-21. The idea that the book buyers all go out of town in midsummer and do not buy books until cool weather, finds its refutation in the prices obtained by the auction houses which continue to do business through the long days when we have natural daylight saving. There are

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the books which come from the libraries of the late Mr. Blank; the scattered lots which have been picked up in hundreds of houses and which seem to be needed less than the money they will bring; the veterans which have lain on booksellers' shelves until they have eaten their heads off with interest; the collections forced into the market by the necessities of the owner, who finds that he cannot eat his books or clothe himself in old newspapers or folios. All these mingle together in a stream, the tiny rivulets combining to produce a flood of books which is pouring, with growing vigor, into the auction rooms of America and England.

Then there are the undoubted properties of collectors who are known to us. We have seen their libraries growing, day after day, week after week, and year after year, and envied them, possibly, the possession of the rare treasures which they carried home from the auction room in triumph. Once we would have said that the book which they secured was irretrievably lost to us. Now we bide our time, and in its fulness the whole collection, catalogued with notes which reveal to us how little we appreciated what we had lost, appears in the auction room to give us another opportunity—only this time our purse must be opened a little wider than before.

Why a collector who has spent years of time and heaps of money in the accumulation of a private library should be willing to see it dispersed in the auction room, unless he needs the money, is a question which has puzzled many a booklover. One would think he would wish to die with his books around him, like old Magliabecchi, though in his case the pangs of approaching dissolution seem to have been accentuated by the thought of parting with his inanimate as well as his living friends. Ask the vender himself;—

He is wise and honorable
And will no doubt with reasons answer you,—

and the reasons will be as various as the sellers of libraries themselves. Heaven forbid that any collector should be open to the charge of being a book speculator! Doubtless, after all, the offense is not as serious as will appear at first. Most collectors are collectors for life, and if they part with their books in the auction room, they are likely to be found buying some fellow-collector's books in the next auction. It is a curious phase of book collecting. Here is one man who has a book that another wants; the other has one he wants. They do not get together and exchange, resorting to the ancient practice of barter, which is recommended by economists as a means of reducing the high cost of living. Instead of doing away with the middleman, both of them are anxious to secure his services. Well, the book auctioneer must live, and he cannot live by having his customers exchange books with one another.

But there is another reason for patronizing the auctioneer. Each possessor of a book wishes to get the most possible out of it when he parts with it. Bookselling is as old as books themselves, but the disposing of books "in the auctionary way" came out of the necessities of booksellers. The Elzevirs used to dispose of their surplus accumulation of stock in this way, and more than four hundred years ago they sold, at their own house in Leyden, the library of one of their customers, the learned Jan Dousa. He thus found a larger circle of purchasers, was relieved of the trouble of attending to the details of cataloguing and the shipment of purchases, and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

incidentally did much for the spread of literature. How far the modern seller of a library is concerning himself with the dissemination of literature for its own sake is a question which I will not attempt to answer, but the other advantages of the "auctionary way" of selling books are obvious.

Bibliomania was defined, a hundred years ago, as "the rage for possessing rare and curious books". Dr. Dibdin wrote about it as a disease, describing causes, symptoms, and cure with notes which occupy more space than his famous essay on the bibliomania, and adding in a postscript, after the manner of Burton, in his "Anatomy of Melancholy", a synopsis of the disease. The notes have some value, but the edition published by The Club of Odd Sticks in 1864 (a reprint of the first edition of 1809) is not recommended, as it is what Dibdin would have described as "on the largest of large paper, measuring 12½ by 9¾ inches, forty copies in quarto and fifty-seven in royal octavo, five of the former and seven of the latter being on Whatman's drawing paper, with rubricated title-page, uncut, a truly magnificent volume". Truly magnificent, indeed, but mighty unhandy to carry in the pocket!

Had Dibdin been living today he would have written a similar volume on the manifestation of the present-day malady of book collectors, which he might have defined as "auctionitis". It seems to be as prevalent as the bibliomania of the last century, no less insidious in its growth and no less deadly in its effects. It is not a new disease, but it may have a new name. "Inflammation of the bowels" has given way to appendicitis in medical parlance; one no longer "goes into a decline" but has tuberculosis, and in auctionitis may be found a refined form of the bibliomania. "A passion for collecting and selling books at auction" may answer the purposes of the compiler of the addenda to the New English Dictionary, in lieu of a more scientific definition.

But the disease itself, although it has never before assumed the proportions of the present epidemic, is of long standing. Book auctions were started in England in October of 1676 by William Cooper, a bookseller dwelling at the sign of "The Pelican" in Little Britain, and by the end of the century probably two hundred auctions had been held—about the number in a single season in our times. The sellers were largely executors of estates or the booksellers themselves, although a few "noble libraries" were thus dispersed, greatly to the distress of John Evelyn, who in his diary refers to the "humor of disposing books sub basta" as already becoming "epidemicall". He abjured Pepys to secure "what with so much cost and industry you have collected, from the sad dispersions many noble libraries and cabinets have suffered in these later times". So those who view with alarm the growing tendency of collectors to put their treasures into the auction room will encounter at once that bugbear of the English-speaking race—established precedent.

Even from the start of book auctions in England the auction room exercised its potent fascination. Millington, the first of a long line of famous book auctioneers, by his combination of learning and genial personality, made the auction room popular. He had been a bookseller, and gains a new importance in our eyes when we learn that it was at his house that the blind poet John Milton lived for some time, and the auctioneer led

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

him by the hand when he went abroad. Pepys and Evelyn, despite their scorn of the venders of "noble libraries" were patrons of Millington's auction rooms and bought the books which they could not have secured had not other noble bibliophiles been tempted to disperse their wares under Millington's genial spell.

Then, too, the ancient book auction partook somewhat of the nature of a social function, and at the dispersal of some great library a luncheon might be served to the patrons. G. D. Hobson, in his history of the famous house of Sotheby's, records that its home on New Bond Street was on the site of an old hostelry named the Black Horse, and the basement storage rooms were formerly the wine cellars of Basil Woodd, adding:

"Perhaps some great bookmen of the past would have regretted that Mr. Woodd's tenancy and our own could not be simultaneous instead of successive."

But Millington and Basil Woodd lived before the days when one-half of one per cent was the only allowable alcoholic content. Put a wine cellar in the basement of an auction house today and the advertising bills would vanish. Geniality and courtesy, however, have not yet been prohibited, and still constitute an asset of an auction house and are potent in showing the possessor of a fine library that the auction method is the only proper one of disposing of his treasures.

To follow the methods of Dibdin and trace the causes of the present epidemic of auctionitis would lead, I fear, to an interminable dissertation. How far the modern auctioneer is responsible, as was Millington of old, in inducing owners of libraries to put their books through the auction room, is not to be discovered in the limits of a reasonable time. The psychological effect of an announcement like that on the Anderson catalogues, which contains an extract from the will of Edmond de Goncourt, expressing his wish that,—

> These things which have been the joy of my life . . shall not be consigned to the cold tomb of a museum . . but shall all be dispersed under the hammer of the auctioneer, so that the pleasure which the acquiring of each one of them has given me shall be given again . . to some inheritor of my own tastes,—

is not inconsiderable. It makes the way easier for the collector who is struggling with his conscience as to whether he should see his books sold or give them away. Follow this up with a statement that the gross proceeds of the Robert Hoe library at auction were $1,932,056.60 and of the Frederick R. Halsey sale of prints $377,244.25, to appeal to the possible profiteering proclivities of the collector, and the auctioneer appears to have made out a pretty fair case.

It requires no effort of the imagination to believe that many of the present and forthcoming sales of old English libraries are due to the pressure of war taxes. In sending his autographs to this country to be sold recently, Sir Stephen Coleridge frankly admitted that with half his income taken in taxes and prices at unprecedented high levels, he was compelled to part with his treasures. There are people who buy these things and pay big prices for them. Why not, therefore, convert into usable cash old books and manuscripts which have been kept in country houses for generations, and which have perhaps not seen the light of day for half a century? What's the sense of keeping what you do not want when somebody else wants it so badly that he will pay a big price for it? Who wants to be a dog in the manger?

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Then there are the collectors who have brought together libraries of books on special lines, who have used the books—the scholarly collectors who have enriched literature or bibliography. Their work done, they have no further use for the books, but can turn their attention to other fields of human endeavor. Perhaps their collecting tastes have changed. Dickens and Thackeray, who once seemed the only authors worth collecting, have palled upon their appetites. Early English literature has charms of which they had not dreamed until by chance they picked up a copy of "Pierce Penilesse his Supplication to the Divell" by Thomas Nash, 1592, in which he disowns the "long-tailed title". So Dickens and Thackeray go to the auction room and the collector plunges into the maze of early English. Too soon he loses himself, and the early English goes after Dickens and Thackeray—at a considerable advance. Nor is this a fanciful picture. It is the actual experience of a noted book collector who employs his spare moments in editing a great daily newspaper. Only one thing remained to him, and he has started upon that—to make the library of the Count J. N. A. Fortsas, composed entirely of unique books, a reality.

Now the auction sale of the library of Count de Fortsas, in 1840, was the most stupendous hoax in the history of book sales. You remember that the library of the count, at Binche, in Belgium, was composed of fifty-two unique books, and the announced sale attracted buyers from all over Europe who had received the catalogue, now itself a bibliographical rarity. On the day of the sale it came out that the count and his library were both myths, the catalogue the clever creation of Rene Chalons of Brussels. The world's most famous collectors and librarians who had attended the sale went home sadder and wiser, but with no books. The modern collector who is aiming at a collection of one hundred books of which there shall be no other copies in private hands, and all works of English literature prior to 1600, is no myth. For lack of a better disguise, let us call him Mr. Jones. Now having collected Dickens and Thackeray and miscellaneous English literature and disposed of them,—incidentally to financial advantage,—Mr. Jones has started with knowledge and a purse, and already I may say has secured a library as large as that of the Count de Fortsas purported to be. What better justification can there be for a case of auctionitis?

Then we come to the case of the speculative collector. The number is not as large as it may appear. Occasionally a wealthy man takes it into his head to collect books, and places himself in the hands of a trustworthy dealer, who secures for him a choice collection along his chosen lines. Suddenly he announces his intention of selling the whole at auction. He does not need the money any more than he needed the books, but the fever is upon him. Only a successful auction sale, which gives him a net return in cash after paying all expenses of the auction room, justifies his plunge into an unknown sea. When he emerges triumphantly, bearing in either hand above the waves a roll of greenbacks, he is satisfied. His judgment of values of books has been shown sound, and he returns to his stock market transactions with the faith in himself that if a bear movement depresses his holdings of securities he can still make a living by using his knowledge of books. As long as he is satisfied no one has a right to complain of this

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

class of collectors. He has played with his toy and enjoyed the game.

Old John Hill Burton, whose "The Book Hunter" is still delightful and informative reading, although time has proved him wrong on most of the conclusions regarding controversial points raised in that volume, uttered the dictum that "no good ever comes of gentlemen amateurs buying and selling". Most of that chapter of Part II on "His Hobby" is devoted to showing that book collecting is justifiable because a well-selected library will yield a rich financial return. No one should collect books for this reason, or even think of it—far from it. For a book collector is likely to think so much of his books that when he comes to dispose of them he will resort to low and mean tricks—"will acquire shabby, questionable habits" as Burton puts it —in order to make his books sell for what he thinks they are worth. The dealer, who expects to continue to serve the same customers for a long time, is subject to no such temptations. The amateur is "apt to become unscrupulous in his efforts to do justice to himself".

That is the argument and a piece of bosh it is. Actually the amateur has not half the chance of the professional in this sort of game, and the fact is that while the artificial enhancement of prices in the auction room is not unknown, no reputable auctioneer will be a party to the fleecing of the collectors who are likely to be continuing buyers. Dealers and collectors alike become speculative under the fire of auction-room competition, and the late George D. Smith, —who probably did more than any other man to raise the prices of rare books, both at auctions and in the shops of the second-hand book dealers, —proved that the most successful operator was the one with the greatest courage. Burton, after throwing out the bait, tells the fish they must not bite on it.

I know there are collectors, like A. Edward Newton, who have never sold a book. I honor them for it, because they are living up to their standards, and have the courage of their convictions. But that is a matter which concerns themselves only and if H. V. Jones had not seen fit to part with his library of early English literature, Mr. Newton would never have obtained his fine tall copy of the first edition of Shakespeare's quarto of "Julius Cæsar". Fortunate indeed is the collector who can feel that there is not a single book in his library with which he would willingly part. Happier still if the purchase made a quarter of a century ago is dearer to him than on the day when he first clasped it in his arms. Yet there are few collectors who do not possess books which they have not looked at in years and which, when discovered, cause them to wonder why and when and where they secured them. Many a collector has bought a duplicate not knowing it to be such, and few could be blamed for disposing of the unwelcome guest when they discover his presence. Each one must decide for himself what he wants in his library. To my mind it requires greater courage to throw out an inferior copy of a rare manuscript in favor of a better one when one has determined to have only a hundred manuscripts, like Mr. Yates Thompson, than to retain all the accumulations of one's constant visits to the auction room.

The publication of annual or quarterly book prices current has done much to spread auctionitis. These publications are invaluable. At times one thinks they ought to be suppressed

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by law, as when someone, who has seen that a book printed by William Bradford brought $2,000, insists that another book should bring the same price because it was also printed by Bradford. The publication of prices realized at auctions sometimes gives the amateur an exaggerated idea of the value of his own collections. He fails to realize that from the printed price must be deducted the auction expenses, and that to the modern collector the condition and binding of a volume, its incidental features, its provenance, may account for a large part of the exceptional price quoted. The bookseller in general and the expert collector, know just how much reliance to place on quotations of this sort. To the unwary they are a snare and a pitfall and they probably have done much to spread the fever for selling books at auction.

The cataloguer is in part responsible for the epidemic of auctionitis. For my own part, there is a world of enjoyment in reading catalogues of auction sales. If priced, so much the better. Not that it tempts one to sell his own books because he finds that an inferior copy of one of them has been sold for four times what he paid for his own; but he experiences a glow of self-satisfaction in having such a desirable book. Personally, I feel that many books are over-catalogued, but the catalogue descriptions are generally more informing than some of the old ones like Heber's for instance, in which "889. Denmark Vindicated, 1694" would seem to call for a personal examination of the copy. Book catalogues are enticing, and cataloguers have an unlimited range for exploiting their wares. What could be better than the description of "The fyftene Joyes of maryage" for which Mr. Quaritch recently paid £285 in the Pembroke sale at Sotheby's, and which was in the original boards "with a panel stamp in two compartments on each cover, depicting St. Katherine and another saint (damaged and loose)". But catalogues are issued to attract buyers, not sellers of books, and while they have a part in inducing auctionitis, they are material for another story. There are many interesting things about them I would like to write.

Of course there will be, in every season, a large number of book auctions which are inevitable as the best method of disposing of a library in the settlement of an estate. The executor, generally a lawyer, may not possess sufficient knowledge of book values to dispose of the library to the best advantage, and to protect himself from adverse criticism by heirs who may otherwise have fancied that some bookseller was obtaining a bargain at the expense of the estate, he sends the books to the auction room, there to sell for whatever they are worth. Lawyers' libraries, by the way, come under the hammer, where they are as a rule smashed to bits, as they rank almost in the scale with theology, which is generally fit only for the paper-mill. It may be mentioned, *en passant*, that the ancient auction house of Hodgson's in London, once had a practical monopoly of the sale of legal libraries. Solicitors, whose books were always sold anonymously, were invariably described as *respectable* until about 1852, after which the epithet *eminent* was employed. Whether there was a fall from respectability of the legal profession about that date must be left for some other historian to determine.

The cure of the disease of auctionitis is unknown, but the field is one for wide psycho-pathological inquiry. The variety of causes which have

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

brought on this epidemic, so that it is really the fashionable thing, apparently, to form a library for the purpose of selling it, is so great that one must proceed empirically in the application of remedies. One wonders how the market absorbs all the books which are offered, and dire predictions have been made of a crash in the prices of rare books. But the fact remains that there are plenty of buyers, who seem as willing as ever to take the books offered and to pay higher prices than ever for the great rarities. Last season's records show that many books reached the highest prices at which they were ever sold. The common books are no longer sold separately, but in lots, and these have a fascination for the collector of moderate means. That is a part of the game, too, and these "miscellaneous books, fifty volumes" have an attraction for buyers like Taylor, the Philadelphia artist, who experiences great joy in unpacking his bundle and separating the sheep from the goats. But he must have a larger house than most of us. Such a buyer, however, is likely to escape auctionitis, for his purchases would never stand another auction sale.

If the owner of a unique copy locks it up, the other dozen collectors who want it will never have a chance to get it. Naturally it is for their interest to encourage him to sell his books. Thus those who never have had the disease go spreading it like so many bibliographical "Typhoid Marys". Practically the auction business of the country is monopolized in two cities, New York and Philadelphia. Boston had to give it up because the only kind of books which were offered to the Boston auction market were what are technically known as "plugs" and left no margin of profit to the vender or the auctioneer, or at best what Updike of the Merrymount Press calls the "common rarities". Chicago has plenty of buyers, but they don't buy in Chicago. They either come to New York or send Walter Hill, which is generally better, unless they incidentally wish to see the sights. San Francisco, looking forward to the time when the finest private library in the world shall have found a home in California, following the westward star of empire, placidly contents itself with its enterprising rare book dealers. So far as a broadening of the auction field is concerned, the remedy seems of doubtful value. New York and Philadelphia will continue to be the paradise of those affected with the disease of auctionitis. There is apparently plenty of money in this country to buy all the rare books offered there. A good working or show library may be had, even in these days of high prices, for half the cost of a first-class presidential nomination.

We have the traveling bookstore; why not the traveling auction room? Whether this would spread the disease into the remote districts is a question. At any rate, it would be no untried experiment. John Dunton, the bookseller who made a successful venture into New England in Colonial days, imitated the example of Millington, who introduced book auctions into the British provinces, as a favor to the intending patrons. Dunton knew Millington and had a high regard for him as "a man of remarkable Education, Wit, Sense, and Modesty. Originally a bookseller, he gave up the business, being better cut out for an auctioneer." Such a paragon ought to sell books anywhere, and Millington, gauging to a nicety the class of books which would be most sought for in

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

different places, took his stock of books into the provinces, his sense showing him that the "general wisdom and intelligence of the inhabitants" would make him welcome, although with due modesty he professed that the financial outcome of his venture was a matter of indifference so that he could "offer matter of Diversion to the Company, minister to the advantage of others and please the generality of my customers". That he accomplished this is shown by his successful sales in Oxford, Cambridge, St. Albans, Tunbridge Wells, Hatfield, Stourbridge and St. Edmundsbury fairs and other places in England. Country sales of books at auction are now a mere addenda to the dispersal of woodlots, antique furniture, decrepit live stock and worn-out harnesses. What might they not be made with some Millington to conduct an auction of books alone! I fancy that in some districts he might take his pay in old books with a double profit.

MURRAY HILL ON HIS TRAVELS

ST. LOUIS, *August*, 1920.

I LOVE a ship. But I hate a train. And, though I hate a number of (evil) things in this world, I cannot at the moment put my finger, so to say, on any one thing which I hate more than I do traveling on a train at night. Naturally, when you do not like a thing neither does it like you. I had a miserable time on that despicable midnight train from Indianapolis to St. Louis. No sleep, not any to speak of—real sleep. Decidedly uncomfortable, wretched state of mind.

In the meantime, I seemed to be getting on toward St. Louis.

I knew all the while that he was there; but I never understood just how you go to see a man who lives in a post office. You know those great long buildings, with the endless corridors full of echoes, little windows all about, and everything.

But one day I was buying thirty cents' worth of stamps in there; and afterward I was going along toward the end where you get out; and on a door I saw the word "Postmaster"; and I said: "I declare! if that isn't where he lives, right in there!" I didn't know then, of course, whether you could go in and see a postmaster, the way you might anybody else out in the secular world; but I confided in a young woman behind a railing my idea of attempting such an act. She said, very pleasantly, it was quite all right for me to go in. And there, 'pon my soul! he was: Robert S. Springsteen—the gentleman who, once upon a time, sold me my first pair of pants.

It was like a cinema: my grandmother (poor old lady! she is dead long ago) took me in the family "carriage" (that vehicle which was the symbol of some position in those days) to the When—that was the singular and humorous name of this clothing store. (There the now a bit elderly, prosperous, and prominent Mr. Spring-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

steen was the young clerk.) I can see myself, plain as print, poised on the step of the carriage, about to alight. My costume—that of a male person of my age and caste—"kilts".

This first suit with short trousers, it was understood by common pact between me as party to the first part and, on the other hand, all the members of my family, was to be for Sunday exclusively. As a handsome concession to the august occasion, an exception was made in the matter of the first day of my possession of the distinguished property.

As, that afternoon, I stood on the pavement before the gracious brick residence where I had been born, and flaunted the sartorial insignia of my manhood, it struck me that the world was singularly unalive to a matter of great moment. At length I could stand this situation no longer. And, with my hands deep in my trouser pockets, I said to the next passerby: "I have on pants!"

* * * *

The strike of the switchmen, or yardmen, or whatever you call them, was on; and we came into St. Louis by leaps of an inch every half an hour.

Oh, yes; those shoes! You will recollect (as you have a retentive memory) that in my account of my departure from Indianapolis I said we (I and the bell-boy who assisted me to "pack") threw into my bag "everything handy". So (in St. Louis when I sought my slippers) I discovered we literally *had* done, more or less regardless of my property as distinct from that of the hotel.

I had transported plenty of ash-trays, but no slippers. And likewise to my "other" shoes—farewell!

* * * *

I don't know whether or not you have ever been to St. Louis. And so, I'll tell you something about the place. A few turns about the streets and you are struck by something—something odd, unusual, impressive. But you don't know what it is you are struck by. Not at once.

Then, perhaps suddenly, the scales drop from your eyes; and you see! What! Why, that the women of St. Louis—all the women of St. Louis!—are very remarkable indeed. A fine lady descending from her car, an elevator lass—'tis the same. Handsome all! Noble of stature and mien. Mettlesome! One thinks of what the old tales call a "charger". And one thinks, too, of that majestic animal whose nostrils scented the battle from afar and who said "Ha! Ha!" Not the petite type this—though I have nothing against that either. But here is sculpture, painting, poetry in a different mood. Elgin marble, not Chelsea china; Rubens, not Watteau; Miltonic angels, not Herrick blossoms. There came into my mind as I lit a cigarette at that busy corner of Olive and Ninth Streets, an echo of that line of Meredith's, and I tried to reconstruct the beat of it. How does it go? "Great-bosomed mothers of the race", or something like that. Ah! (to speak in the rhythm of old Omar) look it up in the books. Books to me are only memories. I read them when (at twenty) I was old; now that, at thirty-five (or so), I am young, my concern is only with the moving spectacle itself. Come; let us go along Olive Street, and *there* read the story and see the show!

And if (and such, indeed, is the general effect of the scene) all the women of St. Louis are of heroic mold and beautiful countenance, so, too, is it true that they subtly know the art of distinction in dress. They dress so well, indeed, that they do not, in the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

least, overdress. They know, what Whistler taught, that a portrait should stand *within* its frame. In this, I think, they have more or less the drop on Fifth Avenue.

* * * *

When I arrived in the city they were putting on a "Forward St. Louis" movement. Some gentlemen of my acquaintance invited me to a luncheon at a meeting of the Advertising Club, where I heard, presented with much eloquence, the merits of "Municipal Advertising", "The Symphony Orchestra", "The Municipal Theatre", and "The Coming Municipal Bond Issue". Then, intending that as an act of courtesy, those in charge of the affair called upon me to "speak".

* * * *

I must tell you, in this my autobiography, how it was with me in the matter of that speaking business. Because I forsee, as we go on, some sport to come of the thing.

Now, the various writers who have told with much incisive humor of the agonies of small boys compelled to speak a "piece" at school have hardly touched the surface of the tortures that, in such circumstances, were mine. Come to think of it, my life from now until the end is comparatively immune from mental anguish. Got little, or no, better in this matter as I grew older. Whenever I had to stand up before a lot of people my brain seemed to fall down somehow somewhere behind my ears. Any nimbleness of mind which I might other times possess departed completely. Nothing whatever resembling a thought or an idea remained with me. Painfully and laboriously I would lift one heavy sentence after another, becoming more and more bewildered all the while by my acute consciousness of my singular importance in the matter of expression. Though later, of course, I had an abundance of what the politicians call "cabwit"—that is, the brilliant things which occur to you on the way home.

There doesn't seem to be any word for the case, such as tone deaf, and color blind, but some sort of thing, this, I concluded—something left out of the machine: I was organically disqualified from "speaking".

At Indianapolis, it was, the miracle happened. Got roped into attending a meeting of the Writers' Club, held in a side room of the very handsome new Public Library building there. Knew I'd be called on to "say something". Nevertheless, went gladly. What do you think of that! Believe you me, I didn't know what to think of it myself.

Gentleman, professor of that subject at Indiana University, gave address on "Journalism". Spoke well—and at considerable length. Here comes the funny stuff. How—at all those occasions throughout my life when I would be, as the barbers say, "next"—had I yearned (with deep and frantic yearning) for him that "preceded" me to continue talking on and on forever!

Account for the phenomenon however you can: I became decidedly annoyed by this gentleman—was he going to talk all night, give *me* no chance at all?

It was a weird sensation—to see (for the first time in my life) a large bunch of eager faces fixed upon me and all alight with approving smiles. I talked, I realized then as well as afterward, too rapidly; and I came too abruptly to an end. But as I glanced at the very slight memorandum I had made during the professor's discourse, the stuff just tumbled out.

And so it was, thus encouraged by

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

my phenomenal stroke of public articulation, that after all these years of quite contrary sentiment in the matter, was born in me the ambition to become a brilliant "platform" speaker. And I resolved to cultivate this art on my travels. Indeed, right keen was I to speak again somewhere else without delay.

* * * *

I began (I was speaking at this St. Louis luncheon):

"Gentlemen: I used to be considerable of a talker. I talked brilliantly, and copiously, all up and down Broadway from Van Cortlandt Park to Bowling Green—in at every corner. Then, along about the first of July, 1919, I noticed that the springs of my talk began to dry up. Still I struggled on, doing the best I could, attempting to keep alive some sort of human contact of mind with my fellow men. But about the middle of January, 1920 (the sixteenth of the month, I think was the date) I gave up. No longer any use! The spirit of fellowship had departed. And now I never say anything at all; and when I do, it isn't worth listening to...." Speeches have fallen more flat than mine. 'Nother step taken in my new art. I was a "coming" speaker. No doubt of it!

* * * *

A new bookstore is being opened here. That is largely what I came about. To take a part, at the kind invitation of the management, in what the announcements term "authors' week". That and to seek to make the acquaintance of the gentleman advertised to act as "master of ceremonies", William Marion Reedy.

He arose, Mr. Reedy, to "introduce" the first speaker. A Chestertonian figure of a man. A pear-shaped countenance (enormous at the base) mounted on a pear-shaped torso. Face aglow like a ruddy lantern. Solemn in effect, very solemn. Put the tips of his fingers together before him, like a Dickensian minister about to pronounce a benediction. Suggested, a good deal, a very large owl.

Or rather, perhaps (after he had begun to speak) an immense, very owlish, fat boy speaking a "piece" at school. He uttered, standing perfectly still, looking all the while straight into the air before him, with a completely expressionless countenance—and (as it seemed) painfully, in a dull monotone—a series of exceedingly humorous remarks. Then solemnly sat down. And continued to present an utterly empty face to the air.

I do not know when I had seen a character which so greatly took my fancy. Perhaps it was when, at the gate of Overroads, I last saw the illustrious G. K. C. himself.

I was told that in order to find Mr. Reedy "in" it would be necessary for me to call at his office in the forenoon, as at this season of the year it was his habit to go to the ball game after lunch.

* * * *

I observed a young woman going along the street holding in her hand a book. Now whenever I discover anyone with a book in public places, such as streets and parks and trains and trolley-cars, I am always curious to discover the title of it. I sometimes put myself out a good deal in order to accomplish this. Eager am I to take someone, stranger to me, in the act of reading one of my own books—covertly to watch his face or hers. A feeling I fancy, common to many authors.

And so I speeded up my limbs of locomotion, glancing sidewise at this young person as I passed on ahead of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

her. The title of the book she carried was: "Only One Love". That would hardly be, I felt, the title of any book of mine.

* * * *

There is in St. Louis a lady of the name of Mrs. J. R. Clemens. Dr. Clemens, her husband, is a cousin of the late Mark Twain.

"Will you not waive ceremony", her note said, "and let us take you to luncheon on Thursday? At one P. M. we should call for you at your hotel (or wherever you might say) and motor to the Sunset Hill Club (which club I think you will find charming) and, of course, bring you back to town. We should ask two or three others to meet you."

The doctor drove me out Pershing, formerly Berlin, Avenue, and we picked up the other men of the party as we went: an attractive young man in training, as you might say, for the priesthood; and a Father Wilbur—a gentleman, I discovered, of interesting history, one time an Episcopalian minister; of vivid personality; of considerable local reputation; and—as the author of a sonnet sequence addressed, as I understand the matter, to Roosevelt, and published something like a couple of years ago—of much wider fame. My impression, got from that "grapevine telegraph" which is all about the air, is that these sonnets are decidedly striking in character.

I had gone into the St. Louis Public Library (this was a bit before this afternoon) and, after wandering about through intricate subterranean corridors there, was endeavoring to find my way out. I looked, I doubt not, much bewildered. She said, the slender vision that suddenly appeared in the semi-darkness: "I'll show you the way". And, figuratively speaking, led me by the hand roundabout to a sort of trick door.

We passed out onto a stone terrace, and (I am always glad to get out of a building, any kind of a building) I was conscious of that lift I always get from fresh contact with sunshine and roving air.... It is a terrible thought: being at length shoveled underground for keeps!

She thanked me very prettily for a note I had put into THE BOOKMAN at the time of the death of the late Cyrus Townsend Brady. (I wished, on this terrace, I had made that obituary notice longer.) A niece she, I learned, of the writer. (I think I'll look up some of those Brady books and read them.)

Of course I had "met" Mr. Frank? No! My! Why I certainly should! And why? Goodness! Mr. Frank was a friend of my friend Joyce Kilmer. Lectured about him, beautifully! Now. But, of course, I'd come across him. Goodby. So glad.... And so forth. Fragrant blossom. And, very probably, I should like well enough her Mr. Frank. I didn't, however, see much likelihood of my walking into him somewhere in the midst of St. Louis during my stay of a couple of days or so. So the matter went quickly from my mind.

Well, what do you know about that! This same Mr. Frank it was, the young man in training for the priesthood, seated by me in Dr. Clemens's car.

* * * *

It is customary for a "travel book", as a bit ago I was at the point of saying, to have at least a few cathedrals sprinkled round in it here and there. Just now, of course, I cannot tell how many cathedrals I may meet in my travels, but (we have been speeding along Pershing Avenue, you know) Dr. Clemens introduced me to one—

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the cathedral in St. Louis still in the course of construction—vast, very handsome, its architectural inspiration, I believe, the abbey at Westminster.

At the Clemens home, where we were to meet the ladies of this party, we discovered that in another car they had gone on ahead. The city dropped away; the countryside took us. Father Wilbur was leading the discussion of religion. A man who would lead in anything, and never follow. The Presbyterians (such of them as read this story—and I hope they will be many, for I have an aunt who is a Presbyterian), the Presbyterians may be interested to hear that:

"They have a great chance to do a roaring trade—a roaring trade!—if only they could see it. What they need is to put on, to take their Book of Common Prayer and put on, a high mass, less ceremonial, and in English. The people, Protestants of all kinds, are hungry for just such a thing. A *roaring* trade!"

The road, this (I was told), Grant used to travel, hauling his wood to barter in the town, and back again after a good drink obtained on the yield of the harvest. There now (shooting by) was his log cabin, guarded (thus the effect) by two iron deer (or maybe stone)—noble animals who fulfilled the double function of also holding the gate to the great park of one illustrious in history as a brewer.

* * * *

What's the name of those mountains out there? Ozark, or something like that. This Sunset Inn place is atop one of the foothills, as I suppose you might say, of those mountains—they rolling away blue in the distance, in that way mountains have, or at least have had ever since Japanese prints came in.

My hostess, three younger ladies, excellent—a most admirable—luncheon. I am attacked, because I told the truth, as it had not before been told, in my very penetrating paper, "The Amazing Failure of O. Henry".

Young person on my right: "But there *is* a great merit in his brevity. Don't you think brevity a great merit?"

Murray Hill: "I do—in O. Henry."

Subject of discussion switches to "free verse".

Young lady across the table: "Isn't a part of its kick the fact that it sounds, free verse, so like free love?"

Talk turns to "uplift". *She at my right:* "All about everywhere these days! One can never get away from it any more! Oh! why can't there be something just real bad in the world?"

Murray Hill (gallantly): "I have a number of interesting ideas as to that, but they are so low I may not tell them to anyone but you." (Most chivalrous thing, I think, I ever said.)

Present a young Mrs. Booker (not quite the way her name is spelled), something of a writer, though not yet in a very professional way. Gentleman had recently remarked to her, it seems, on the beauty of St. Louis women. Tapped a tale in her mind, did her recollection of this.

She had written an article denying the high cost of living. Idea: things cost no more now, in proportion to the average income of today, than they used to; money has become so easy, we simply think we need more things, in particular more luxuries than we ever knew of in more wholesome times. Moral: beat it back to simpler thought.

Article was accepted by a woman's journal of which it may be you have heard. On way to cash check in pay-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment for story, author strongly attracted to gold mesh bag seen in window. Wrestles with temptation. Asceticism triumphs. Author proceeds on course. Comes to *beautiful* beauty culture parlor. Is thrown by the tempter. Pays down full amount of check for first course of treatment. Still taking it. Doesn't know how many courses by now.

Father Wilbur: "But what put the utterly foolish notion into your head that you needed any such thing as beauty culture?"

Murray Hill: "Quite so! And, anyhow, didn't I say that the first thing that hit you about St. Louis was the beauty of its women?"

Chorus: "*Where* did you say this?"

Murray Hill: "Put the story in the mail last night."

Chorus: "Have you a carbon copy? Produce it."

Doubted; no, denied, was my word, because no carbon had I. But I had said it, nevertheless.

MURRAY HILL

THE LAW-BREAKER

BY AMELIA JOSEPHINE BURR

On the sacred island Miyajima
Birth and death are forbidden by the gods.
What doom will they deal to me
Who doubly have broken the law?
For tonight as I walked with you
Beside the starry waters
An old love died in my heart
And a new was born.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

RECENT FRENCH BOOKS

Proust the Much-Discussed and Others

BY A. G. H. SPIERS

PROUST'S "A l'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs" and the discussion it has aroused constitute a document—of what importance only the future can tell—for the history of twentieth century civilization: it sheds light upon the aspirations of our day. It suggests a new outlook upon life and is written according to a new method: and for these reasons mainly it has proved highly congenial to a large group of persons. Coming after the same author's "Du Côté de chez Swann", it has made of Proust a constant subject of debate: individual critics, newspapers, magazines, have been for him or against him; none has found it possible to ignore him. He is, according to a competent observer, one of the two writers with whom every enlightened person in France must be familiar; and this last volume has won him the Goncourt prize.

Strange to say, "A l'Ombre" seems at first absolutely unreadable. In style it goes counter to the virtues we most admire in the French,—their precision, their brevity, their clarity. Its sentences are involved and more than half a page in length; its plan is elusive; and it is long, fearfully long: not only do its two volumes total six hundred pages of the closest print; but, what is more, to understand them thoroughly, we must remember that these two volumes are only the second instalment of a work in five parts, of which "Du Côté", already mentioned, is the first; and of which the third, fourth, and fifth are announced as already in press. If this plan is carried out as it has been begun, Proust will be the author of the longest novel yet written!

The general title covering the whole series is "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu" and it is precisely in Proust's method of recapturing the past that lies the originality of his work. "A l'Ombre" describes events in the life of a young man, presumably the author, during a short period of his adolescence, stressing particularly his thoughts and feelings—thoughts and feelings so described as to produce a novel and striking effect upon the reader.

There are many different ways in which an author may recall the past of his youth, as the works of Anatole France, Loti, P. Margueritte, C. L. Philippe, and others amply show. But the ways used heretofore have one characteristic in common: an object or incident once described remains, generally speaking, unchanged to the end of the story. This is not the case

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with Proust. The past and the things of the past have, according to him, highly contingent attributes; an object or incident met with twenty years ago is one thing; met with nineteen years ago, it is another, the intervening twelvemonth having changed the youth who perceived it. Thus, to take examples from "A l'Ombre" itself, the hero sees the celebrated Berma play "Phèdre"; he makes the acquaintance of an aristocrat, Saint-Loup; he meets a young girl named Albertine. All three are vividly described as they struck him at the time; but there is nothing more final about these descriptions than about the judgments and feelings of the ordinary man as he lives from month to month and year to year: they are changed with time. A striking comment upon Berma's acting, heard some hours after the performance, so impresses the young man's imagination that her art takes on an added charm; the discovery that Saint-Loup is related to certain persons known some years earlier, makes the aristocrat less admirable; and as for Albertine, how conditional is the first portrait Proust gives of her, may be seen by the following quotation (from which I eliminate several dependent clauses for the sake of clarity!):

Je devrais donner un nom différent à chacune de ces Albertine qui apparaissaient devant moi, jamais la même; surtout, de la même manière qu'on dit dans un récit le temps qu'il faisait tel jour, je devrais donner toujours son nom à la croyance qui, tel jour où je voyais Albertine, régnait sur mon âme, l'aspect des êtres, comme celui des mers, dépendant de ces nuées à peine visibles qui changent la couleur de chaque chose.

Proust, however, is no impressionist. If he adopts, in part, the methods of the impressionist, he does so only in so far as they permit him to reverse the usual process of literature. For there is a difference between the observation of the man who lives and that of the author who recalls. These men look at the story of their lives from opposite ends and, as a consequence, see it differently. The author who recalls, impressed with results and latest aspects, makes a choice among many details and emphasizes in each event that feature only which leads most directly to these results or aspects. On the other hand, the man who lives cannot so choose and simplify. The future alone can explain the permanent characteristics and the real significance of any particular event. Ignorant of this future, he must perforce study the various appearances of the moment; and he is as keenly alive to the several possibilities which they contain as the traveler who has taken one road at a fork in an unknown country, is struck by the presence of the other road to which he may be forced to return later. Consequently his observation is more varied and richer.

Proust reproduces the approach of the man who lives. Having reached a particular point in his story, he is careful not to correct the impression of the moment by knowledge acquired at a later date. Thus far, then, he follows the method of his painter, Elstir, who, before painting, "se faisait ignorant". But it is necessary to note that Proust "se fait ignorant" of the future alone; the past, he keeps constantly in mind. The feelings and perceptions of his hero are constantly affected by what he has known before. For instance, he becomes interested in Mlle. Simonet. Contrary to what might be expected, he is not distressed at finding her less broadminded than he had at first supposed; and the reason for this is that, when in love with another young girl earlier in the story, "J'avais entrevu qu'en étant amour-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

eux d'une femme, l'important n'est pas la valeur de la femme mais la profondeur de cet état"!

We should note also, when discussing this distinctly original work, that Proust makes another departure from the usual in literature. As a result, no doubt, of this same desire to approximate real living, he shows himself to be neither a rationalist, a sensationalist, an intuitionalist, nor any other "ist". He feels that no normal man is solely mind, senses, feeling, or intuition. Here at last, then, is a writer who, discarding the annoying exclusions and overemphasis of this or that school of novelists or philosophers, presents a synthesis of all, or nearly all, the forces which the average individual knows to be potent in his life.

The fundamental ideas of "A l'Ombre" are therefore both novel and, apparently, sound. Unfortunately in working them into his book, Proust has sinned grievously from the point of view of art—so grievously, as I have already pointed out, that I am a little surprised to find any but the professional student of letters reading more than his first half-dozen pages. That he has become so popular is evidently due to the fact that his ideas fit in with the spirit of the times. For some years now our civilization—and more especially that of Europe—has been in a curious dilemma. It is still determined to resist the reintroduction of the tenets discarded a quarter-century or so ago; yet it feels the need of a discipline of some kind. In its view of man, as in its politics, it is inclined to be neither bolshevik nor reactionary; it nevertheless craves some principle by which to direct its irrepressible instinct to observe and investigate. In this dilemma certain individuals have, to be sure, turned back in practice—and in practice only—to the accepted religions, finding in them a ready guide for the expression of their energies. The bulk of society, however, has been too scrupulous to do this: feeling, as an anonymous writer very recently put it, that "involuntary obedience corrupts the soul", it has sought to achieve its own "reconciliation with the universe". Failing in this, it has fallen back upon a disordered, though none the less passionate, worship of life.

To such persons, "A l'Ombre" may well appeal. It supplies them with a systematic principle for the interpretation of our acts and feelings, without robbing life of its variety, its richness—all the intellectual and emotional stimulus that comes from passing on eternally to new and fuller aspects and uncertain consequences. Proust's idea is this: at any particular moment, we are all compounds of previously acquired ideas, sensations, and sentiments; these determine our approach to this or that person, object, or event; and each succeeding experience of life modifies in its turn the predisposition with which we face the following experience. We who read his book, have the sense of growing with his hero. We are interested in this youth, not so much because we are made familiar with the persons, objects, and incidents that he meets, as because we develop with him in his knowledge and feelings concerning them. In other words we discover the world, we live, with him. And there is much exhilaration in this vicarious second life. Therein lies the appeal of "A l'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs" to the civilization of our day.

There is a tone of faded rose leaves and yellowing lace to Raymond Escholier's "Dansons la Trompeuse".

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mme. Lestelle is a relic of a bygone civilization: music, dancing and art, bright conversation and innocent *galanterie*, the cult of joy and beauty, these are the breath of her being. Unfortunately she falls upon a modern bourgeois community where the graces and pretty trifling of an aristocratic day are turned to ridicule. One person alone has taste and humanity enough to appreciate her—l'abbé Roumens. Soon, however, she is deprived also of his respectful sympathy. And finally she dies, not so much because of her poverty (though it is extreme, she refuses to take it seriously), as because she has outlived her age. But she dies true to her ideals. Finding her very ill, Mme. Ambrosine suggests that she dress more comfortably: "Ce manteau a l'air de vous écraser et cette voilette vous étouffe." "Non", replies the plucky Thérèse, "j'ai trop mauvaise mine."

Those who recall the love of John Stuart Mill for Mrs. Taylor before he married her in 1851, and the inspiration afforded him by her grave as he watched over it from his residence in sunny Avignon, will not deny the power of a respectful and mystic affection to deepen profoundly and without melancholy the inner life of an active and superior man. It is good to remember this when reading Edouard Estaunié's "L'Ascension de M. Baslèvre". Estaunié enjoys an enviable reputation as a writer who thinks and observes vigorously. In this novel, he shows how Baslèvre, the dry and machine-like head of a government bureau, is awakened to an interest in his fellow men by his love for Mme. Gros. The author describes the stages which lead Baslèvre to an ever purer feeling for this wife of a shiftless *bon garçon* until, after her death, the Sundays he spends in the house and amid the furniture which once were hers give him the heart to look with joy upon the beauties of the world and to direct with human kindness and sympathy the work of his busy office.

In the competition for the Goncourt prize won by "A l'Ombre des Jeunes Filles" discussed above, the "runner up" was Roland Dorgelès's "Les Croix de Bois". This book won the Vie Heureuse prize and, though by no means so interesting philosophically and socially as "A l'Ombre", it is far easier reading. It is, indeed, a highly entertaining, well-written collection of more or less connected stories of the war, to be recommended especially for two features that distinguish it from most collections on the same subject: having a better perspective, it is marked by a greater emphasis upon what will appeal to the average reader; and, though it does not avoid the pathetic, it contains a large measure of red-blooded merriment and fun.

A l'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs. By Marcel Proust. Paris: Nouvelle Revue Française.
Dansons la Trompeuse. By Raymond Escholier. Paris: Grasset.
L'Ascension de M. Baslèvre. By Edouard Estaunié. Paris: Perrin.
Les Croix de Bois. By Roland Dorgelès. Paris: Albin Michel.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE LONDONER

Publishers in a Panic—Holidays and Work—A New Wells Novel—Robert Nichols's Play—Edmund Gosse's Attack on Daisy Ashford—Seriousness—The Table Talk of Authors—Sir Harry Johnston—New Playwrights—Knut Hamsun—Grant Richards—Advertising and Literary Success.

LONDON, *July* 1, 1920.

SUMMER is upon us, and we are all much more interested in open air doings than in anything else, except, of course, ourselves. And so literature is at a discount. Matters in the trade remain much where they did when I wrote my last letter; but if anything they have developed steadily in a bad direction. Books are being written, and publishers are shying from them. I heard today of one book which had got to the point of sitting in the hands of the printers for estimating purposes, and which at the last minute was snatched away and returned ignominiously to the hopeful author. It was he who related the event, but when I heard the tale he had recovered from the first shock, so I do not know what his remarks had originally been. Things have come to a pretty pass when books are thus sent back at the last minute in this way. The action indicates a perfect panic. But I am glad to know that other cases have occurred where publishers have gone beyond the point of flight, and have actually held to their promise to publish. I like to hear of promises being kept. A kept promise increases one's self-respect. A broken promise is the beginning of a moral stampede.

* * * *

Most authors are holiday making. I am glad that they are still prosperous enough to take holidays. The fact remains that they are. I hear of two novelists who are on the point of buying yachts. Another is divided between buying a house and a motor-car. Holidays abroad, trips to far climes, town houses of terrifying amplitude, these things are nothing to our leaders. More power to the comfort-loving instinct! But it will not produce any better books. All self-indulgence begets further self-indulgence, and a self-indulging life is the last thing to result in good creative literature. It is more likely to give birth to second-rate stuff, because when one loves comfort one desires to perpetuate it, and comfort and painful energy go so badly together that a kind of fatty degeneration seizes the imagination. Let us hope I am only joking.

Some authors are busy. They are writing plays and novels and film scenarios and letters to the American press, just as I am doing. They are terrifyingly active. It cannot be good for them in this hot weather. Personally, I am very busy; but it is solely in order that I may enjoy a conscience-free holiday in the next few weeks. If nothing else prompted me, I should long ago have abandoned literature for some lighter occupation.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

As it is, I am going into the country to forget that there is such a thing as a book-buying public or a contract or an agent or a publisher. I am going among people who know of no book later than "The Young Visiters" and who will think of me simply as the Simon they knew of old, before he went out into the great world to win his fortune by his fountain-pen. It is a cheering thought. No letters, no telephone, no club, no books, and no literary gossip. Thank God!

* * * *

Wells, they tell me, is in Prague, with a number of others who have at heart the welfare of the League of Nations. But whether Wells is forgetting his new novel I doubt. I am told that this new novel is seriously begun, and that it will to some extent resemble "The Undying Fire". The vitality of Wells is my constant marvel. Imagine any other writer turning straight from the task of completing a history of the world in an enormous number of words and with extraordinary labors behind it in the shape of untold reading and research, and beginning a new novel. I could not do it, and yet I do not as a rule mince matters when time presses. Wells is one of the genuine, as opposed to the artificially-boosted, portents of our time. His energy should be an example to all his juniors.

* * * *

The juniors, of course, are busy in other ways. In the party which is devoting its energies to the League of Nations is Robert Nichols, the young poet who visited America some months ago. His new book of poems is just out here, and has been greeted sonorously by Edmund Gosse and Laurence Binyon. Personally, I do not care for this book as much as I did for its predecessor, "Ardours and Endurances"; but that is probably because of my own preferences. What I am really looking for is Nichols's play, which I seem to have heard about for ever so long. The idea for this play has been more or less public property for some time, in the curious way in which such news gets about. And we are all waiting to see the actual product. It is not without its significance that several of our young poets are coquetting with the notion of writing plays. In part, I suppose, it is the prospect of making money by the stage which attracts them; but perhaps more than that is to be found in an unconscious realization that lyricism is a little played out, and that a new form of art must be attacked. The novel is the obvious alternative, but the novel takes longer, is more exacting of endurance, and is rather too common. However, some poets have even taken to the novel, and I am sure they will adorn any field of art which they patronize.

* * * *

Talking just now about Edmund Gosse reminds me that he has just produced a ponderous attack upon Daisy Ashford and the taste of a public which found amusement in "The Young Visiters". It is a little late in the day to attack the public for liking a book which has been so universally enjoyed as this; but it is this fact which robs Mr. Gosse's attack of all its possible venom. He has waited, that is, until he can honestly express what must all along have been his view of the story of Ethel Monticue and her admirers. Of course, I disagree entirely with the adverse critic, as most of his readers must have done. But then I never laughed at the parts of the book which he censures. What I laughed at, and still laugh at, are the beautiful touches of naïveté, and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not the unconscious sophistications. Mr. Gosse has concentrated upon these and has supposed that they alone are responsible for the book's vogue. He is wrong. It is his own sense of humor which is at fault. It is a pity that our oldest critic should have this imperfection; but Mr. Gosse is not alone. I have been hearing incredible tales of a novelist who takes himself seriously. I do not mean that it is new for novelists to take themselves seriously. Far from it! But this particular novelist appears to have reached an altitude—not especially of self-esteem, for in that line I could name many who could give him points ——but of seriousness. He talks, I gather, rather like the late poet laureate. When a man does that, it makes one suspicious of his quality.

It would be amusing to note the table talk of some of our authors. I do not mean, to take notes of it. That would be too unkind. I mean to contrast the talk of one with another. I have lately been conversing with a writer whose talk is of an extreme liveliness; and it has been the sense of contrast between his remarks and those made to me on other occasions by the humorless novelist that has prompted these observations. Some writers are dummies, but there are not so many of these as one might suppose. Most of them talk, not well, but readily. Some are good talkers. One of them is the best talker I ever heard or ever hope to hear. The young ones as a rule talk too much. It is only natural. I hope they will get over it.

* * * *

A very amusing talker among writers is Sir Harry Johnston, who is writing a new African novel which touches upon missionary life and work, and at the same time tells a romantic and passionate story. Sir Harry Johnston has so fertile a mind, and is interested in so many things which to you and me are obscure to the point of tedium, that he is never at a loss. I can imagine few more interesting and amusing things than to talk with Johnston. He is making heroic efforts to complete his great grammar of the Bantu languages (a life work for any ordinary man, but a mere item in the life work of Sir Harry Johnston); is working on the novel to which I have just referred; is making elaborate notes for a book on African mammals, a subject upon which he recently lectured to the African Society; is keenly interested in the active work connected with the League of Nations; and has time for painting, gardening, peacock-breeding, simplified spelling, and innumerable other things. To look at him, and to hear his gentle voice, one would never suppose him capable of such physical energy as is required for work so continuous. I imagine that the whole explanation must lie in the fact that Sir Harry Johnston is never dull, that he can turn easily and with relief from one thing to another, and gain rest by the best means, change of occupation. All the same, his record is a marvelous one, for he knows Africa as few men do, has quelled risings and executed justice with his own hand; and remains in spite of all a delightful man who seems never to have had anything wild or exciting in his life at all. For so much is the outward appearance of men to be relied upon.

* * * *

I may as well add several facts to what I mentioned last month regarding D. H. Lawrence and Compton Mackenzie. Mackenzie's next book is to be called "Rich Relatives". It will be seen that this is intended as a sort

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of companion-volume to "Poor Relations". This is a new kind of sequel. It should be an amusing book. On the other hand, I may have been wrong as to the title of Lawrence's novel. I hear that the title has been changed. I shall not hazard the new title. One amusing fact about these two authors is that both have been writing plays. Mackenzie expects his dramatization of an early novel to be produced in the Midlands in October, and it is possible that one or more of Lawrence's plays may be seen also before the end of the year. I am specially glad to observe the emergence of Lawrence after so long a silence. Readers of this causerie may remember how often I have expressed regret that one who is perhaps the only genius among our young writers should not be more productive.

* * * *

I hear that Conrad is writing a new Napoleonic novel, and that his tale "The Rescue", just published in England, is having considerable success. There is very little to compete with it. The only novel over which I have observed any general excitement in this country is Knut Hamsun's "Growth of the Soil". This remarkable work has been enormously admired, and even overpraised; but it is better that one book should be overpraised than that we should have the right to feel that good work was being passed over in silence. It is generally assumed that Hamsun was unknown in this country before "Growth of the Soil". But the truth is that at least one other of his books has been issued here in translation—"Shallow Soil". What has given a fillip to the interest in Hamsun is the mystery surrounding the publishers of "Growth of the Soil". They announced themselves as the firm of Gyldendal, and said that their object was to introduce Scandinavian literature to the English public. They set about their work by issuing a list of books, none of which was known by repute, and at last "Growth of the Soil" was put upon the market, very unappetizingly produced, without a translator's name, and without any special boosting. The omens were unpropitious, one would have thought. Not so. Truth will out. The book was found to be surpassingly good, the translation equally good. Who were the Gyldendals? Who was Hamsun? Who was the anonymous translator? All those questions have been more or less answered.

Hamsun must find his way to America by himself, if he has not already done so. Gyldendals are taken for granted. But the man who is running the London branch, or the London firm, is also the translator of "Growth of the Soil", and his name is W. Worster. Besides translating the books and managing the business, Mr. Worster has himself written a book, "Merlin's Isle", which is supposed to be a study of "Kipling's England", whatever that may be. It is very pleasant to become aware of such enterprise as Mr. Worster's, and to feel that it is meeting with its just reward.

* * * *

I do not know if there is much combination of literary men and publishers in America; but here it is very noticeable. Mr. Worster is only one of many who have doubled the rôles. But perhaps the most amusing of all (not even excepting the sensational Herbert Jenkins) is Grant Richards. Grant Richards is a real figure in the publishing world. He long ago began to liven things up, and was in my young days a dazzling star in the firmament. A morning star. He published Bernard Shaw and Samuel

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Butler; he published the Dumpy Books for Children (including that miracle, "Little Black Sambo", which still unobtrusively sells in tens of thousands); he started everybody wondering seriously about cheap reprints when he suddenly threw upon the market those marvelous fat "World's Classics"; and in fact he generally made things very full of movement and excitement. And then, when more sensational things had been crowded into his business life than are in the habit of falling to the lot of young publishers, he suddenly took to writing successful novels himself. He wrote "Caviare". It had a welcome, and a sale, that many professionals would have envied. It had two successors, and then Grant Richards did not write any more novels for a time. Number four, called "Double Life", is now ready. It is more than ready. It is in the public eye, in the public hand. And now comes the problem. Most bookmen know Grant Richards's method of advertising in the "Times" Literary Supplement. It takes the form of a very personal letter, in which the publisher chats about what books are selling and what books he would like to see selling. Sometimes the letter contains little items of domestic news, such as the introduction into the business of the publisher's son. And the problem has arisen: what is one to do about "Double Life"? Grant Richards has done the bold thing and the right thing. He has talked heartily and modestly about his own book. He has blushingly quoted its favorable reviews. Who will blame him? Only envious authors, who think they would like to have the opportunity of advertising *their* own books.

* * * *

Authors are always dissatisfied with the advertising of their books. I never met one who didn't grumble. Once I met a publisher in the street. I said, "Ah, I see your advertisements." He gave a cry. "Will you write me a letter, saying so?" he asked. "I could show it to my authors, who don't believe we ever advertise." It is, of course, true that one never sees an advertisement of one's own book anywhere. One never sees a copy of the book itself in any bookseller's shop. I never have done so. And yet people say to me, "I see your books everywhere." I say, coldly, "Do you?" And then I meet another author. He says, "I never see my book advertised, and I never see it on the bookstalls." And then I know that the mischievous imp who dogs authors and their vanity has been at work again.. He must throw dust in their eyes. I wonder if Grant Richards sees *his* book, and *his* advertisements. He is very brave, because all his authors are bound to say to themselves, "Yes, he can advertise his *own*. . ." But then perhaps Grant Richards only has nice authors, or those upon whom the spell has not been laid.

What, then, is the secret of successful advertising? There are some who say that there is no such thing as successful advertising. I have been told this over and over again; and yet publishers continue to advertise and authors to grumble that their works are overlaid and smuggled out shamefully by people who do not know their own business. I believe it to be true that any amount of advertising will not turn an unsuccessful book into a successful one. A book that is selling, however, does seem to be stimulated by having its name kept prominently before the avid public. This is not altogether surprising. It is

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

like the mnemonic. If you have once made up your mind to read a book almost anything will serve to remind you of its existence. Nothing does it better than an advertisement. Reviews help, of course; but they have lost any authority they once had. At one time a good review would sell an entire edition. Those days are past. All the same, I was told the other day by a bookseller that a review in one of our most noted critical journals was beginning to send readers to any book favorably mentioned. I think this is a good sign, because the journal in question is above puffery, and has gained some esteem for its unremitting honesty. Even so, reviews do not account for any very large sale. Many of the books which have the largest sale have the poorest press. Many of those which have the best press do not sell at all. Other influences have to be sought.

In the case of popular novels the thing that sells the books is simply imitation. But in England the thing that sells a good book, or at least a book of some artistic pretensions, is talk. If certain leisured coteries or sections of the cultured public hear of a book, speak of it, and commend it sufficiently, that book will become a dinner-table topic. It will sell mysteriously. The author will get a curious renown. His first editions will begin to appear in the catalogues of second-hand booksellers. His name will be made. Everything will conspire in his favor. Once it is the correct thing to have read his book, fashion will dictate a restricted success. There will gradually follow a series of references in the press, for all love to be in the swim. And the wider public will follow not from instinctive liking for the work, but from a sense that whatever is so vigorously canvassed must have a kind of social cachet. When that time arrives, the author will not be able to avoid success. He can do no wrong. The tide will inevitably turn, and opinion will be adverse; but nothing can stop his triumphant progress. I cannot too strongly stress the fact that in England literary success is social. It is a working of inscrutable forces. And the principal force in this matter is the human tongue. Not all the adroit advertising, either on Grant Richards's model or on some other less personal, will do anything without talk. Talk is the champion of letters. If the pen is mightier than the sword, the tongue is more powerful than either. The tongue, and the social sense. I do not think even the attack direct, such as the unsigned postcard of recommendation, as it has been recently employed, is more potent. In fact I think the unsigned postcard is a stupid dodge, because directly one receives such a card one is suspicious of its good faith, and shows it to friends as a trick, and then forgets the title of the book commended, so that only the fact that something has been illegitimately praised remains in the memory. No, it is talk that does the trick, and it is talk, the verbal, face-to-face recommendation, that leads to demand and sales. But first of all, it leads to reputation, and without reputation sales are of no use to any novelist who is not merely a hack. What a strange world is the one we live in! We take all our opinions at second-hand, and we take from the press our political views more readily than our literary taste. That is because the reviewer has no such power of repeating his opinions as is possessed by the leader writer. Once he has said his brief say, the reviewer's power over us is gone. In politics we learn by

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rote. We repeat what we have been told half-a-dozen times. In connection with books we only repeat what somebody has told us with all the weight of the human voice. We ought to be very careful of what we say. In print the thing said has less moment, because we can all discount what is said in ink, once the authentic tone is blurred and blotted by the likeness of one printed phrase to another. Anything I say here carries less weight than a few words pronounced aloud, because the identity of the writer is bound to have evaporated in the act of literary composition. Therefore, nobody will believe me.

SIMON PURE

WHAT AILS PEGASUS?

BY RAYMOND M. WEAVER

FOR the authors of those great poems which we admire do not attain to excellence through the rules of any art", says Plato in the "Ion"; "but they utter their beautiful melodies of verse in a state of inspiration, and, as it were, *possessed* by a spirit not their own." Or from the "Phædrus": "He who, having no touch of the Muses' madness in his soul, comes to the door and thinks that he can get into the temple by the help of art—he, I say, and his poetry, are not admitted." We have it on the authority of a long line of poets and critics, reaching back to its *locus classicus* in Plato, that there is a mystery about creative art deeper than intellect or will, descending to the poet as by the theological mystery of grace. The great artist does not sit with grim deliberation in his study and proclaim: "Go to! I shall write a masterpiece!" The creation is done as by obsessional madness: a madness which after its enactment offers a test for the sanity of critics.

As society becomes intricate, sophisticated and critical, it tends to discipline its creative spontaneity, the artist becoming a critic with a theory to exemplify; art degenerates into artifice, architecture into upholstering. Poetry comes to be a specialized vice fostered by "Societies" and "Schools" —a sickly ornament for an ugly existence, not a smile on the face of society, an overflowing of genuine happiness and power. The celestial madness of the heavenly bards finds sorry caricature in some of our half-demented versifiers. The prosaic dulness of the "divine average", immaculately ignorant of great poetry, is flattered by the Platonic contention that poets are mad—diverting neurotics to be viewed with the most complacent patronage.

Yet the classical poetic madness—so rare in any age—is not, as our democratic civilization is so obligingly eager to believe, a sign of weakness or degeneration, but rather of perfected power. All authentic poetry is born of the conflict between irrational nature and rational desire. The dull and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

decent Philistine whose strivings never troublesomely venture beyond the hearth-lit circle of a laden board and a double bed, must view with bovine perplexity those who find tragic antinomies in life. But the more lofty one's ideals, the more incommensurate one's desires, the keener is the tension in one's heart as one's dreams tug at the cordage of reality. For the achievement of pleasure, relaxation, sanity of mind and body, these tensions must find some relief. In inferior beings, this tension may result in pathological derangement; in superior souls, however, relief—or purgation—from this stress is ideally achieved in religion or noble art. The "divine madness" of the poets—"le rêve par lequel l'homme aspire à une vie superieure"—is the bursting forth, from depths unplumbed by cold practical reason, of powers of lofty insight and heaven-born desire.

Emerson saw in this divine madness the only escape from the militant materialism of our choicest middle-class blood: "O Celestial Bacchus! drive them mad,—this multitude of vagabonds, hungry for eloquence, hungry for poetry, starving for symbols, perishing for want of electricity to vitalize this too much pasture, and in the long delay indemnifying themselves with the false wine of alcohol, of politics, and of money." The multitude of newly printed volumes of poetry at the present day would seem, upon a superficial judgment, to indicate that Emerson's prayer was bearing rich fruits. The appalling fecundity of our emancipated press,—littering as it does, and usually to a gelded Pegasus, several hundred times a year—is a miracle to challenge attention. But it is only imbecility that would hail this miracle as a successful and glorious fulfilment of Emerson's prayer.

Modern poetry is doubtless largely motivated in madness—but only a diabolist would call this possession "divine". Tested by a high standard and a strict judgment, and compared with the best in poetry, our modern loquacity in verse is a sorry spectacle indeed. An illustrious few — notably John Masefield and Edwin Arlington Robinson—have caught some breath of the divine afflatus. A larger congregation seem seized with a kind of versifying epilepsy: not genuinely inspired, but possessing in some degree the versatility and power of transforming themselves into the semblance of inspiration. But the most conspicuous company, lacking the gestures of the authentic divine madness, and finding the current limitations far too tame, have set to work with solemn deliberation to invent some new technique of abnormal behavior: a behavior that charlatan-wise is designed to pass as a violent, if novel, seizure of the muse. This last group is composed of the practitioners of the so-called "new poetry". Reversing the order of all authentic creation—a reversal that will probably disparage and date our period a hundred years hence—these apostles of the new dispensation have pieced together, largely out of old shreds, elaborate theories of poetry; have published programs and manifestoes; have with journalistic tact labeled themselves Symbolists, or Imagists, or Futurists (Presentists would be a juster name); and these preliminary rites performed, have perverted prose into the semblance and caricature of verse and called it "new poetry".

Besides these three groups—the inspired, the imitative, and the quacks—there is a fourth, practically indistinguishable from the quacks in result, but differing to some degree in

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

motivation. Just as the genuinely inspired poets have their reverent apes, so the quacks have their irreverent parodists. The difference between these last two, however, is purely academic, since in effect it is almost never safe to say with certainty just how much of the "new poetry" is pious fraud, how much malicious wit.

The "Poems"—ironically so-called—of T. S. Eliot, if not heavy and pedantic parodies of the "new poetry", are documents that would find sympathetic readers in the waiting-room of a private sanatorium. Clinically analyzed they suggest in conclusion one of Mr. Eliot's lines: "After such knowledge, what forgiveness?" As a parodist, Mr. Eliot is lacking in good taste, invention, and wit. Compared with Rudyard Kipling, Thackeray, and Phoebe Cary (among the most accomplished parodists in the language) Mr. Eliot is prodigiously labored and dull. General incomprehensibility and sordidness of detail (defects not difficult to imitate, but excessively difficult to parody) are Mr. Eliot's distinguishing traits. He is usually intelligible only when he is nasty. His similes are without humor and without point:

> He laughed like an impossible foetus.
>
> Midnight shakes the memory
> As a madman shakes a dead geranium.
>
> The world revolves like ancient women
> Gathering fuel in vacant lots.

Mr. Eliot may cynically have perpetrated this slim volume in order to glean from the tributes of his admirers material for a new "Dunciad".

Alfred Kreymborg's anthology of "new verse" entitled "Others for 1919" promises to stir to occasional rapture the boastful few who find the aroma of Mr. Eliot's "Poems" pleasant to the nostrils. "When little boys have learned a new bad word", says Kipling, "they are never happy until they have chalked it upon the door. And this also is literature." Mr. Kreymborg seems to share Kipling's cynicism: a cynicism heightened by the debasing of Mr. Frost's poetry by including it among so much ghastly incompetence. This book is less the product of the "new poetry" than its excrescence.

"New Poems" by D. H. Lawrence—containing "a preface on the nature of poetry" and a dedication "to Amy Lowell"—is another manifestation of "the rare new poetry" (the phrase is Mr. Lawrence's). The *credo* of this avowedly new technique is thus stated by Mr. Lawrence: "Much has been written about free verse. But all that can be said, first and last, is that free verse is, or should be direct utterance from the instant, whole man. It is the soul and the mind and body surging at once, nothing left out.... It has no goal in either eternity. It has no finish. It has no satisfying stability, satisfying to those who like the immutable.... It does not want to get anywhere. It just takes place.... The ideal—what is the ideal? A figment. An abstraction. It is a crystallised aspiration, or a crystallised remembrance: crystallised, set, finished. ... We do not speak of things crystallised and set apart. We speak of the instant, the immediate self, the very plasm of the self. We speak also of free verse."

One can fancy that when "free verse" spreads to Wonderland and the realms beyond the Looking-Glass, Humpty Dumpty, without the slightest surrender of his dogmatic irresponsibility, might harangue the immortal Alice in Mr. Lawrence's very words. It would give a false semblance of dignity to Mr. Lawrence's exuberant immaturity of thought to

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

detail the contradictions and naive absurdities of his isolated statements. But the general drift of Mr. Lawrence's preface is clear enough, and because it is representative of the pronouncements of a "school" that is actively demoralizing our poetry, it demands a discussion beyond its intrinsic demerits.

With amusingly ponderous self-importance, Mr. Lawrence struggles to proclaim as a new evangel the hackneyed distinction between rational and unrational art. He undertakes to celebrate as "the rare new poetry" that type of verse which Mr. Santayana has studied in Whitman and Browning and diagnosed as "The Poetry of Barbarism".

This "rare new poetry", in its theoretical pristine purity, records without synthesis or significance beyond the moment, what a Buddhist phrase has called the "pictures of the floating world". A logically consistent apostle of "the rare new poetry" would have to transcend the analytical habits of grammatical speech. The apostles of "the rare new poetry" could best exemplify their creed by staring at their navels in the manner of the Indian mystics and uttering the sacred syllable "Um!" But the Imagists do not practise strict logical austerities. "The pulse of emotion, the bobbing up of thought, the streaming of reverie" (to quote Mr. Santayana out of his context): these Miss Lowell and a scarcity of her disciples can note down with picturesque force, or imagine with admirable fecundity. Yet the limits of such excellence are narrow. At best, "the rare new poetry" can achieve pregnancy of phrase, vividness of passion and sentiment, heaped up scraps of observation, occasional flashes of light, occasional aptness of cadence, all like, —

> The quick sharp scratch
> And blue spurt of a lighted match.

But, whereas justly rational art—"the poetry of the eternities" which "the rare new poetry" so proudly eschews—has always availed itself of the excellences which the Imagists relegate as new discoveries to themselves, "the rare new poetry", in its pretentious isolation, tends to distinguish itself by the heightening of its vices. "The rare new poetry" is a "moment's monument": not a choice moment, but *any* moment. Writers of this confession are prone to admire what is impertinent or accidental because it is their own: to put a premium on mere cleverness, mere daintiness, mere subtlety, oddity, bravado, bluffness, nastiness. As T. Sturge Moore says (in his brilliant and discriminating new volume "Some Soldier Poets"): "They offer to exploit the Peru of their minds for the benefit of the world. They would work it with scientific nicety, or else record the whimseys of feeling, seeing and thinking to which they are subject when most alarmingly unlike other men.... Deluded by a specious loyalty to taste, men tie themselves to first thoughts and raw emotions as though they were more essentially their own than thoughts cleared and polished by reflection, or emotion chastened by considerate expression. 'I want to put down just what I think, what I feel, nothing more, nothing less,' they plead. Alas! had you taken up that theory in your infancy you would be a baby still."

Mr. Lawrence's "New Poems"—like the overwhelming bulk of "the rare new poetry"—seems inspired less by any remote touch of divine madness, than by a labored and sophisticated anxiety to exemplify a theory. Great genius—as shown by Wagner—can

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

theorize with temerity; lesser geniuses —as in the case of Wordsworth—risk salvation by tampering with articles of faith. Poetry cannot be made to prescription. When they forget their theories and forego their frequent practice of parodying themselves, Amy Lowell and Vachel Lindsay attain to genuine poetry. But Mr. Lawrence has none of the brilliancy of Miss Lowell, none of the power of Mr. Lindsay. His slim new book offers the pathetic spectacle of a shabby manikin pirouetting in caricature of the Muse.

"Diantha Goes the Primrose Way" by Adelaide Manola Hughes, is another manifestation of "the rare new poetry". The book has been praised by our literary guides. The President of the Poetry Society has pronounced Mrs. Hughes's "vivid little drama of a woman's soul" to be "intense, convincing, and realistic in the best sense, full of power and artistic self-restraint"; her "swift and veridical effects" he finds either to "throb with wild passion" or to "glow with the white heat of domestic rapture". The Editor of "The Red Book" is moved to say that "the pictures are as vivid as lightning"; and an Associate Editor of "Current Opinion": "Out of the book blows a wind as from a forest of orchids haunted by Baudelaire."

"Diantha Goes the Primrose Way" (which sprawls over the first forty-nine pages of Mrs. Hughes's rapturously eulogized little volume) is a "swift moving narrative" in loose verse, and like Meredith's "Modern Love" is a study in triangles. Diantha, in a series of monologues on her sex and her soul, vividly betrays herself as a type of woman inevitable among other well-known evils of an intricate, prosperous and disintegrated society: neurotic, brainless, and overfed,—a curious piece of bric-à-brac, fitted for no useful purpose under the sun, but in her place quite ornamental, and certainly very expensive. She tells us in her first effusion:

> I toss upon my warm, safe couch at home.
> My soul in direst conflict
> Utters smothered cries.

She thinks of "two trains speeding through the night", one bearing away her husband "fortune gathering in the West",—

> Towards me in the other
> Speeds my lover.

In the fifth monologue, "Diantha tries to understand":

> I look pityingly at my husband so often now,
> Because he has this monster me for wife.
> Yet I love this husband of mine as dearly as before,
> But I gave all of myself to Martin.
> How strangely terrible!
> I am a wanton!
> Yet most of my thoughts and deeds are good.

But Diantha finds adultery piquant. Before many pages she goes shopping with Martin, and we find her "gurgling and giggling" and "tingling with delight" at her "own wickedness".

> What matter?
> Pouf! The world!

But Martin wearies of what she calls "the vastness of my adoration".

> How I hated you!
> How I despised you!
> I rang for Burroughs to bring some iced coffee.
> I sat down again with a book; kept tapping my feet as the actresses do;
> Read page after page; and never saw a line;
> Went up to my sitting-room; threw myself on the day bed; closed my eyes—
> Then cried
> A lot.

Diantha follows this up with what is fashionably known as a "nervous breakdown"; is shipped to the hospital; loses her hair; bravely resolves to wear a wig—and to keep her own secrets.

> And my punishment is this:
> That I must bury my secret in myself,
> Because, though it would ease my soul

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And give me peace to tell my husband,
Yet I must not destroy his happiness.

Such is the performance "as vivid as lightning flashes", that is said to "throb with wild passion", that is like "a forest of orchids haunted by Baudelaire—a singularly authentic performance, an achievement". Mrs. Hughes's volume of "the rare new poetry" also satisfies Mr. Lawrence's canons: "It has no goal in either eternity. It has no finish. None of this. It is the instant; the quick. It does not want to get anywhere. It just takes place." One is reminded of Doctor Johnson's verdict upon "Ossian": "Sir, anybody could write like that if he would but *abandon* himself to it." To turn from "Diantha Goes the Primrose Way" to Meredith's "Modern Love" — works abysmally separated in treatment, but similar in theme—is to be appalled at the trivial poetizing upon which our accredited critics lavish their choicest epithets.

The rest of the congregation of hopelessly minor writers of "the rare new verse" whom the shortage of paper has been powerless to silence—such as Paul Eldridge, who, "thoroughly convinced by long study and meditation that life is mud", has with double aptness entitled his volume "Vanitas"—offer but the futile task of drawing nice distinctions between monotonous types of incompetency. But a word should be said of the latest volume of a writer who is exerting an extended influence in popularizing vers libre, an author whom the New York "Tribune" has called "the ablest handler of pure English among American poets and the one most surely visited by pure inspiration".

Witter Bynner, in his "A Canticle of Pan", is more of a ventriloquist than a poet. He speaks in too many voices, and on too wide a range of topics to have achieved mastery in any manner or distinction in any style. In "The Cardinal's Garden" he makes a pale attempt to compete with Browning in a type of composition wherein Browning's supremacy is most undisputed: the dramatic monologue of a Renaissance churchman. In "Point Bonita" he tries his hand at a humorous ballad. "Romance" unconsciously parodies John Donne's "Go and catch a falling star". In "The Patricians" he adventures into satire. "A Dead One" is the soliloquy of a wharf-haunting whore. "The End of the Road" experiments in dialect. "Night" is "from the Russian of Polonski". "Across the Ferry to Fort Lee" strives to be passionate with lyric rapture. There is an epigram "To a President"; an "Ode" to Isadora Duncan; a sonnet to "Jane Addams"; three "canticles"—which are advertised as being written "in a remarkable new verse form"; and a bulk of vers libre largely on oriental themes: these and dozens of other fyttes besides.

There are three "canticles": one "of Pan", one "of Bacchus", and one "of Praise". The first is a "chant of communion" between Pan and the Christ-Child; the second sings the ancient praises of the grape; the third offers thanksgiving for the end of the war. There is no novelty in these so-called "canticles" either in form or in idea; they are community masques, merely, in the manner of Percy MacKaye. Mr. Bynner's "canticles" may on occasion prove highly satisfactory when presented as community masques, but when read as poetry they are commonplace.

Mr. Bynner's most recent ventures into free verse are largely in the "oriental manner": that is, they treat of temples, and Buddhas, and lotuses, and tiles, and lutes, and pine-trees, and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bamboos, and Ts'uen, and K'e, and Kiang, in short prose passages strangely broken up into lines of irregular length and printed in the semblance of verse. "In the Yoshiwara" is typical:

> She sat as white as moonlight
> When the sea is still.
> She moved as bright as moonlight
> When the sea wrestles with the shore.

As is "A Tea-Girl":

> When the fish-eyes of water
> Bubble into crab-eyes—
> Tea!

The influence of the Orient upon English poetry has been entirely pernicious. Mr. Bynner has not escaped the demoralizing influence of our contemporary and widespread hankering after exotic novelties. Both the language and the poetry of China and Japan, though differing vastly from each other, are irreconcilably alien both to the genius of our speech and the traditions of our literature. Whereas English poetry—with Greek—is perhaps the greatest in the world, oriental poetry—and Japanese in particular—is superlatively narrow in its scope and resources, and is chiefly remarkable for its limitations. The poetry of China and Japan is known in the Occident only in translation. All translation of poetry, even when between languages so closely related as English and either French or German, is a desperate and losing compromise; but English translation from the poetry of the Chinese or the Japanese is as hopeless and deceptive a task as trying to transpose a color-print into an oratorio. Lafcadio Hearn was the first to call attention to the epigrammatical prettiness of Japanese poetry: but in his translation, the strict prosody of the *tanka* and the *haikai* degenerated—and of necessity—into a prose caricature of vers libre. Yone Noguchi capitalized our hysterical avidity for foreign novelties, and an "oriental manner", founded on tourist impressions and on inadequate and misleading translation, came to be an affectation of lovers of the brainless and the bizarre. Some of Mr. Bynner's trifles in the "oriental manner" seem "oriental" only in title and in being printed like linear translations, as "A Father" (from "Chinese Drawings"):

> There is fruit, my son,
> Bitter to the taste at first
> But afterwards sweet...
> It is called advice.

Does Mr. Bynner call this "Chinese" to suggest that platitudes are peculiar to Celestial parenthood?

Mr. Bynner's volume is singularly unauthentic: it is an anthology of imitations (none of them particularly effective) of most of the known manners of prosody.

But lovers of imitative verse need not lack for delight when they have finished Mr. Bynner's volume. There are the "Sonnets from a Prison Camp" of Professor Archibald Allan Bowman, written, as Professor Bowman says, as "a labour that 'stood between my soul and madness'" (Professor Bowman here quotes from his hundredth sonnet). Benvenuto Cellini also wrote sonnets in captivity: and they are as perfunctory and uninspired as are Professor Bowman's. Will D. Muse, in "The House of Love" has caught the easy, if monotonous and cheaply luscious cadence of Ella Wheeler Wilcox's metrical effusions; but in shamelessness of sentimentality, and paucity of intellection, he owns no master. In "The Well of Being" Herbert Jones offers (in fifty-seven sonnets and a narrative poem in forty-eight pages entitled "O Mistress Mine") an amatory volume of valentine sentiments

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

enunciated with formal rectitude. The "Verses" of William Cary Sanger, Jr. (some of which were originally printed in "The Vindex" of St. Mark's School during the years 1910-1912) represent sound and average poetizing after the best conservative traditions of school-magazine verse. "The Spacious Times and Others" by Francis Coutts, warmly patriotic in most of its parts, lacks the reserve of Mr. Sanger's verse, and in technical accomplishment falls considerably below the standards of "The Vindex" of St. Mark's School. The "Pilgrimage" of Lord Gorell is oratorical versifying in the formal manner of Dryden or the eighteenth century; he has caught the rhetorical formalism of the Augustans, if not one glimmer of their brilliancy and point.

In "War: An Ode, and Other Poems", by Ronald Campbell Macfie, a fondness for lofty and exalted characterization often transforms rhetoric and oratory into impressive bombast. The war ode—"a bold poem on a high theme"—traces, through fifty-two pages of astounding verbal exuberance, the insanities of strife from the birth of the world according to the nebular hypothesis down to the vision of a time when,—

> Love will again awaken,
> Truth will regain her crown;
> Men's seismic souls have shaken
> A million Dagons down.

This ambitious introductory ode is followed by a brood of lesser odes and invocatory pieces. There is an "Ode to Welcome Queen Alexandra", "An Ode of Immortality" on the sinking of the "Titanic", a "Wedding Ode", an "Ode in Commemoration of the Federation of the South African States", —to mention but a few typical subjects. A representative specimen is the beginning of the "Quatercentenary Ode" (written for the University of Aberdeen):

> Eternity is throned upon thy spires:
> Upon Eternity thy towers rest:
> Thou wert conceived in the eternal fires
> Of the sun's womb: upon the sun's white breast
> Wert carried ere the souls of men were made—
> Nay, in the nebula the seed was sown
> Of every stone,
> And by the stars were thy foundations laid.
> The fire-mist held thee ere the sun it bore;
> The sun had presage of thee ere she hurled
> From her wild heart the world;
> And the hot world enwrapped thee at its core,
> In lava and in lightning, to wait
> The slow fastidious finishing of Fate.

What little thought there is in Dr. Macfie's poetry is slight and banal enough: but his is the gift of saying nothing with declamatory pomp and elaboration. He writes intimately of "antediluvian trees" and "carboniferous bogs" and "the cohorts Fate has hurled", and "the fierce Unknown", and "troglodytes" and "Death's immortal accolade" and a solitary "Hecatompuloi", and many other august and polysyllabic wonders. Dr. Macfie can bewilder and amaze by his sesquipedalian prolixity: but this is the power more of a shrieking necromancer than of an inspired poet.

The "Moods and Memories" of Edmund Leamy (bearing a foreword by Don Marquis that bravely sacrifices critical discrimination to personal amity) betrays none of Dr. Macfie's frantic and pompous verbosity. While there is nothing particularly distinctive about Mr. Leamy's verse, it is a straightforward, workmanly product, largely celebrating the average normal moments of a sensitive normal man. It is the sort of poetry that in a more ideal society nearly everyone would write for his own behoof, and circulate in manuscript in the Elizabethan manner among his friends until perpetuated in print by an admiring pirate. Mr. Leamy's is an ingenuous

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sincerity that would submit to the wiles of the printer's devil more to please his friends than to glory in self-parade. At this time Mr. Leamy's book comes as a wholesome counteraction against the sickly and perverse aberrations of so many of our theorizing æsthetes.

Robert Graves, in his "Country Sentiment", offers a refinement and sharpening and heightening of Mr. Leamy's admirable qualities: whimsicality, tenderness, and a gallant and laughing honesty that sins neither toward the rose pink nor the dirty drab. He is at once more primitive and more refined than sophisticated studio realists.

"In April Once", by William Alexander Percy, enjoys Mr. Graves's excellences and finely tempers them to an unusually high degree of genuine poetic mastery. Mr. Percy's book consists of a poetic drama in one act, about half a hundred lyrics, and a longish philosophical monologue entitled "An Epistle from Corinth". The drama—"In April Once"—is a singularly beautiful and poignant study of a Renaissance youth, Guido, who sacrifices his life out of impetuous generosity, that a leper and a jailer (though a very knightly jailer) might tempt death. Guido—physically, mentally, and morally splendid—is held a prisoner near Florence, in "the very troubadour and gypsy time o' year". He has lived as page at the court of Frederic II in Palermo, where he learned,—

Of men long dead who seemed to us ourselves,
Only more wise and radiant and fair,
Who lived in Greece once, loved with their whole strength
The earth and sun, and offered up their prayers
To many cool-eyed gods with rippling names.

But Guido's young life was richer even than these old parchments:

When we rode up from Sicily, the page and I,
We killed a robber, saw the Pope,
Danced in a masquerade, fasted two days;
Composed ten rondelays,
And kissed a princess on the cheek.

Yet withal he had not learned the protestant heresy of the total depravity of man:

And how diversely are we lovable!
We must be quite a pleasure to our Lord!

Nor was nature less lovable than humanity:

Why, now I think it would not be so hard
To meet Lord Jesus walking there alone,
Watching His springtime glisten up,
And humming to Himself.

Guido, in the April of his life, and in the April of the year, when,—

The boughs are dreamy with new-opened blooms,
The laughter of the air shakes petals down,
The forest paths are dappled with the sun,—

is mortally wounded:

No priest can mend what's broken here.
And for the rest...
Persephone or Mary will recall
That I on earth was young and beautiful.

He dies in the arms of his page Felice, while Felice sings, at Guido's request,—

that song we made
As we rode from Sicily.

In his lyrics, Mr. Percy tastes in some degree of the divine madness of Keats. Rare indeed is Mr. Percy's pure lyric gift: limpidity and strength of emotion and adequacy of art. These lines from "A Volunteer's Grave" attain to the classical purity of Walter Savage Landor:

Not long ago it was a bird
In vacant, lilac skies
Could stir the sleep that hardly closed
His laughing eyes.

But here, where murdering thunders rock
The lintels of the dawn,
Although they shake his shallow bed
Yet he sleeps on.

The two most important volumes of poetry of the year are "Lesbia and Other Poems" by Arthur Symons, and "Enslaved" by John Masefield. Poetry,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

says Aristotle, "implies either a strain of madness or a happy gift of nature". Surely no living poet writing in English enjoys more than Mr. Masefield the inspiration of what Plato calls "the Muses' madness". Mr. Symons, by "a happy gift of nature", is one of our most supremely accomplished artificers: an almost impeccable craftsman. Poetry, says Mr. Symons, demands "all the duties and responsibilities of the sacred ritual": the ritual to him has become in itself a kind of religion. With a "deliberate rhetoric of the flesh" which he learned from Baudelaire and the French Symbolists, he has molded his poems into strange metallic shapes. He is the almost flawless carver of beautiful ivory caskets: but of caskets which serve no utility beyond the beauty of their workmanship. Mr. Symons might say with Théophile Gautier: "I prefer a statue to a ghost". Mr. Symons's "Nini patte-en-l'air" (to the memory of Charles Baudelaire) and his sonnet "Rome" (to José Maria de Elizando) are perfect examples of deliberate, soulless, lapidary art.

It is commonly known how Mr. Masefield, while living in Yonkers, New York, in 1896, discovered English poetry in Chaucer's "Parliament of Fowles" with all the awakening of a religious conversion and started upon his career as poet. Since that time he has not written to exemplify any revolutionary tenets of art or of life, but as a whole-hearted apostle of the loftiest traditions of English poetry. Vastly different from Mr. Lawrence's is Mr. Masefield's creed: "Chaucer and Shakespeare, some lines of Gray, of Keats, of Wordsworth and of William Morris, the depth, force, beauty and tenderness of the English mind, are inspiration enough and school enough and star enough to urge and guide in any night of the soul, however wayless from our blindness or black from our passions and our follies." Mr. Masefield is the single poet writing in English today who both in popular esteem and by the most exacting critical estimate legitimately belongs to the august line of poets who are among the chief glories of our race: to his greatness no journalistic cavil can add or take away. He has attempted no sudden novelties, no rupture with the past. Without failing in sincerity or power, without sacrifice of beauty and nobility, he can touch without flinching any sordid horror of tragic life. The weak poets shrink from the truth by a retreat either into artistry or into feeble idealism; the prosaic poets fail to transform it; the perverse poets deliberately misrepresent it. Barring Mr. Masefield and a comparatively obscure minority, our contemporary "poetry" is weak, prosaic, and perverse.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOVELS WITHOUT A HERO

BY H. W. BOYNTON

THE thing that has struck me, this month, is that so many of the more responsible novels are novels without a hero—that is, with a woman for central figure. "Vanity Fair", with its adventuress-heroine, was a really novel article in its day. Behind Becky were the Roxanas and Moll Flanderses of old, but they had long been out of court when Becky came upon the scene. They were frankly improper representatives of improper times; Becky stood alone among the Victorian heroines. Because she had nothing of their dove-like (not to say cow-like) quality, she was an object for suspicion at first glance. What could be expected of a girl with a notion of the world as a place where she had a right to live and move and get what she could for herself like any male? Most unladylike. Very well, then, says Becky, you be the lady. Here's a world full of absurd notions about all kinds of things, especially sex. Sex is a tool to use when nothing less tedious will serve.... Thackeray, who adored the Amelias of his period, was rough with Becky. Neither he nor his readers could "see" a woman setting out to live "on her own" without unscrupulousness to aid her. Becky had to be looked on not as a fellow-sinner with redeeming traits, but as a born monster. Name of a chignon or a side-whisker!—why shouldn't we citizens get our money's worth out of her as a spectacle?

That was the natural way of the black-walnut period toward woman as a free agent. Then came a gradual limbering-up, and the appearance in the later fiction of the century of various young women who were neither angel nor "vamp". Next in order came the fiction of defiant feminism which showed woman adventuring, single-standarded and scatheless, just like a man only more so, among a world of blustering or cringing males. And now at last the novelists, male and female, are beginning to give women the same kind of handling as men, without consciously holding them up as rivals or enemies of men. Instance our present group of novels, which deal more or less earnestly with the making of a woman from the nursery or the gutter up,—with her natural if not always blameless adventure in quest of happiness or character.

First among them I should put "Margot's Progress", by Douglas Goldring, who was only yesterday presented to American readers. He is a new English novelist of the post-Wellsian dispensation; very observing and inquisitive about modern life, but less bitten by the "idea" than most of his breed. In a recent preface Mr. Hewlett (who is, unlike most novelists

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of power, a sound critic) makes a fine generalization. "Every story which is worth the name, which is not a mere anecdote, or a string of anecdotes, but has a reasonable soul in human words subsisting, embodies either a moral idea or a personality.... You may write around either without denying yourself the help of the other; but one or the other will be substance, the other accident." In "Margot's Progress", personality is the thing. Not the "temperament" which has for some time been the play-word of brilliant, irresponsible story-tellers. They have scorned the word *character* as hopelessly tainted with worthiness and respectability. Mr. Goldring isn't afraid of such a word, and uses it to sum up his sense of a personality essentially or potentially in harmony with—whatever matters; and therefore a something in itself. The word cannot be robbed of its morality. We see Margot's character developed through her gradual realization that in contrast with the empty shells of social respectability and pride (her original objects), stands the self-respectability without which she can find no honest love or happiness. Not that she is transformed or converted; time and change simply reveal her to herself: and the real she is not of the type to be put off with the sly and sordid winnings of a Becky. For all Thackeray's pose of superiority to convention (see the beginning of Chapter XXIX of the second volume of "Vanity Fair"), he could see his way to do nothing for the widow Crawley. You remember how she fades off into a dingy Continental mist with poor Jos Sedley's insurance money. She could be of no virtue in a world of Amelias and Dobbins. Maggie Carter is a sly puss who becomes a woman; and we get to know her without self-consciousness on either side. Here is the real point of contrast between a book like "Vanity Fair" and a book like "Margot's Progress". Says Thackeray, "Come, life isn't what we pretend. Let's draw aside the curtain and speak as frankly as we may (of course there are bounds) about what we see." Mr. Goldring, the modern, says nothing at all. The curtain is drawn: here is our world as he sees it. His eyes are upon it, not upon us. We may take it or leave it—an interpretation unfinished, but pausing upon a rising inflection, in contrast with the "Vanitas Vanitatum!" of the Sublime Clubman's finale.

"The Book of Susan" is a book of less integrity. I don't mean that the author has lacked the most honorable intentions. He has meant his Susan to be a real and important person. But the very fact that she is the central figure in a novel of personality makes everything hang on our belief in her. I for one can't believe in her. She is one of those unearthly clever and charming gutter-children who have been so eminent in the best-sellerdom of the near past. Her father, a drunken mechanic of New Haven, murders his mistress and kills himself, and thereby makes easy Susan's adoption, at thirteen, by a rich dilettante of thirty-three who two years earlier has been deserted by an uncongenial wife. Situation: youngish guardian, charming ward, wife in the offing. Six years pass between chapters. They have been devoted by "Ambo" to the education and spoiling of Susan. That lady, grown extremely accomplished, is now old enough to be in love with guardian, who is, of course, in love with her. But there is the wife, still watchful in the near offing. What shall be done? Why, kill off the wife. So far so good.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But Ambo's two special friends, a Yale professor and a New York radical, also love Susan. Maybe she loves one of them back: or does she yearn for young Jimmy, her childish flame? Cross-purposes, misunderstandings, Mrs. Grundy and all, for two hundred pages. Finally it takes a bomb from a Gotha in the streets of Paris to bring Susan to the point of letting Ambo know what we seem to have known since the birth of time—that she loves him alone. Ambo feels that three fingers and a half a leg are a small price to pay. Ambo is a good-natured fellow all through.

Now it is easy, with a little malice, to make any plot sound absurd. The reason why one reader is unimpressed by this plot, and even finds it absurd, is because he is unimpressed by Susan. If not impossible, she is undesirable as a child, with her pertness and her knowingness. And if she later becomes, as we are given to understand, a distinguished author, her diaries and letters, as here quoted from, belie her genius. She is over-clever, oversprightly. So, for that matter, is the whole book; in which, with all its sparkle of detail, one nowhere feels the poise and dignity of the larger invention.

"Sarah and Her Daughter" is, in kind, at the other end of the gamut. There is no sparkle or inventive brilliancy in these pages. They are full of an acrid literalism or naturalism. They plump us down in the Ghetto of New York and, as it were, rub our noses in its dirt. Sarah Mendel, mother of Minnie and the rest, was "pretty Sarah" in her girlhood days in the old country. But she never had the seeds of character in the beneficent meaning of the word. The squalor and unease of East Side life embitter and narrow her. She has no dignity or generosity; only a sour sentimentalism to temper shrewishness. She can be made temporarily idiotic by the death of her husband; and can grow thereafter into a kind of money-madness as mistress of a sweatshop in which her own children are the pitilessly exploited victims. The daughter Minnie is naturally sensitive. School and high school fill her with aspirations for a better life than that of the Ghetto. At sixteen she revolts from the tyranny of her mother and her stepfather, and leaves "home". Follow her pathetic and familiar adventures in search of a living wage and a decent mode of life, her amorous persecution by all sorts of men; her instinctive self-defense; her laborious achievement of better jobs, to be lost because she is unwilling to yield to the desires of the men, or to condone the trickery and injustice of the women, who are her employers. Meanwhile love, the real love which she feels to be the one sure prize in this baffling world, is always eluding her. And more and more she is oppressed and outraged by the spectacle of her kind suffering, struggling helplessly and hopelessly about her and the world over. Her own health has been wrecked by inheritance and the living conditions of her childhood. As inmate of a Jewish hospital she reaches her nadir of bitterness and disillusion:

> What a somersault her life had taken! In ruins lay all her hopes—a sorry mess. She was once more a bit of scum of the earth in a Human Job-Lot House. Like her mother she had made the ascent and descent.... Why? Why? The question tossed in her head desperately. But there seemed to be no one to whom to put it. Her heart wound itself into a tight knot, her lips began to feel drawn as with acid. A sense of outrage welled up from the nethermost of her being. The world had it so slickly arranged that there was no one to ask, no one to challenge, no one to blame. Her eyes wandered out into the corridor and then into the vast ward opposite where lay

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thirty other human beings cheated and mangled like herself. Above them were more, below them were more; to the right and to the left were more. There were more, more, more——. All over the *world* there were humans, cheated, mangled, like these, like herself. Her chest heaved; her eyes blazed; her heart vacillated between anguish and disgust. "The host who make their march triumphant, trampling *us* down in the way on their way do so because *we let them*—because we let them. We let them because we have not enough spirit to rebel effectively. Poverty is a sin—a vice—a wrong—a shame—a disgrace to *all* of us called civilized. The conditions that make it possible must be hewn down and swept away. The world must be exterminated or readjusted."

Here, I suppose, is the moral idea around which (in Mr. Hewlett's phrase) the book is written. As a story, otherwise, it is very little more than a string of episodes reported with pitiless minuteness. For neither Sarah nor her daughter achieves that consistency of soul which one hails under the name of personality or character. The moralist of aristocratic bent may fairly infer that both fail because they deserve to fail. They haven't in them the germ of moral success (by which we mean anything but conventional goodness). They are weaklings, capable of summing up experience in a grimace against the world of men and a desire to smash things. When Minnie has arrived at the now fashionable philosophy outlined above, what does it do for her? It persuades her that she may as well fling her decent instincts overboard and sell herself as mistress to a fat Maloney; a fate from which she withdraws only to the extent of selling herself as wife to a squalid Morris Caplan. A filthy world, and all a muddle, look which way you will!

If ruthless and harrowing versimilitude is of service to you, accept it in this book. Why the publishers should assert that it is a new thing, is not clear. Far from being "the first novel setting forth the whole world of the Ghetto and the emergence of the younger generation into the larger world of American life", it is one of an extensive and growing series. To those who have read Abraham Cahan's "The Rise of David Levinsky", and a dozen other recent Ghetto novels, little remains to be experienced of the sights, sounds, and above all smells of the East Side.

Jane McRae is another maiden of low degree whose problem does not involve the settlement or unsettlement of the world's troubles. She is fairly well occupied with certain troubles of her own. Unlike Susan, who had a drunken father and a stepmother (or thereabouts), Jane has a mother and a drunken stepfather. McRae is proprietor of the Eagle Hotel, Antioch, New York. He is the kind of weak bully a drunken stepfather ought to be. Jane's mother is a Frenchwoman whose beauty has been drudged out of existence, but appears again in fair Jane. The opening of the tale is not promising. McRae blusters, mother frenchifies, the handsome young engineer and the movie man make love to waitress Jane, and she bridles and snaps after the best traditions of village virtue. She is frightfully discontented with her lot in Antioch. Making beds and washing dishes and above all waiting on table is soilure to her haughty virgin soul. Also it is work. Jane "can't bear it", must get away, and so on. The mother is mildly sympathetic, but McRae (believed by Jane to be her father) grinds her down, until his final enormity in flinging her at the head (for business reasons) of the movie man. The movie man is willing; but meanwhile Jane and the handsome young engineer, a gentleman of a rich family, have made up to each other. Alas, the young

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

engineer has loved before, not blamelessly; and Jane, when she discovers the fact, will have none of him. Now to tell the truth all this business of Jane and the engineer, from beginning to end, is unreal and commonplace. I don't believe Mr. Luther believes in it much. Jane herself is least credible and desirable whenever that young man is brought on the scene. Except his good looks and his fine phrases, there is nothing or next to nothing "to him". What "makes" the book is its study of Jane in relation to the movie man; I'm not sure but it's the movie man himself. Gault the bounder, the roughneck, with his vulgar tastes and his conceit and his unscrupulousness in "getting ahead", is in his way a fellow to tie to. Jane does a reckless thing in marrying him. But it is pretty clear before long that she might have done worse, and in the end we begin to doubt whether she could have done much better. The author does not permit life to answer that question. I suspect he found Gault taking possession of the scene so completely that he had to get him out of the way rather summarily or the leading man, namely the handsome young engineer, would have been completely out of the running. But after all, does he not deliberately leave the movie man in possession, in that fine closing passage in which Jane for the first time, perhaps, achieves the firm ground of character? Gault, on his way to be an ace, has flourished once too often, with a naive eye on the gallery: Jane arrives, late, at his camp just after the accident:

> They stopped by a group of cadets.
> "I saw it," one was saying. "She went nose down all in a second. He was too low to volplane. Too bad he couldn't have wound up potting the Huns. Plucky chap, but he would take chances. Did stunts over the town, I hear. Wanted to show his wife a thing or too, maybe. She's visiting the camp. A movie actress...."
> Her affrighted eyes sought Ann's.
> "Oh, not that—not that."
> She was no actress now. She was all woman,—all wife. Of course he had wished her to see him fly. If she had not overslept would he have been less rash—still alive? Gault had bequeathed her an unanswerable question. It did not occur to her that she was free.

"The Romantic Woman", who tells her own story, is neither slum nor village bred. This is a story of "high life", of those idle or busy rich who are the destined victims of predatory Maggie Carters, or the hoped-for victims of revolutionary Minnies. From its other end of the social scale it is as diseased a book as "Sarah and Her Daughter", as much a product of ardent and sterile egotism venting its unhappiness in a burst of not very decent frankness. No extreme radical, if he were credulous enough, could ask for a better document against wealth and birth. The "romantic woman", daughter of a rich citizen of "Iroquois", which is obviously Chicago, marries an English aristocrat and is made free of the secrets of his decadent order. No physical squalor of the Ghetto could exceed the spiritual and mental squalor of these languid, corrupt "best people", with their hallmark of the public school and the London season. They go by nicknames like "Binky" and "Ruffles". Their good manners are based upon a studious affectation of boredom. They believe in nothing but their own superiority, care for nothing but the trivialities of sport and the novelties of sensation. The "romantic woman's" romance is merely sentimentalism; and the foiled sentimentalist is always a cheap cynic. Brush away the pink mist in which his world is enveloped and you reveal a disgusting thing. Out of disillusion most "naturalism" is born. The "romantic woman", as we know her in this nar-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rative, lives in a gutter of her own making. That it is a gilded gutter is a matter of curiosity rather than of real importance. If you can find either constructive idea or positive personality in this book, I cannot; and therefore it remains for me, despite its clever elaboration of detail, that thing which Mr. Hewlett rightly dismisses as not worth the name—a string of anecdotes, and no more. Here, alas, is no "reasonable soul in human words subsisting".

Margot's Progress. By Douglas Goldring. Thomas Seltzer.
The Book of Susan. By Lee Wilson Dodd. E. P. Dutton and Co.
Sarah and Her Daughter. By Bertha Pearl. Thomas Seltzer.
Presenting Jane McRae. By Mark Lee Luther. Little, Brown and Co.
The Romantic Woman. By Mary Borden. Alfred A. Knopf.

IN DAISY TIME

BY MYRA A. LAMPREY

Adown a woodland road I slowly turn—
Toward silvern birches—banked with fragrant fern;
A cuckoo sounds his one prophetic note
And noiseless slips away;
A chickadee, soft-pleading to his mate
Tells me how sweet the day;
And I—
The daisy's petal spells my fate—
He loves me,
Loves me not—
He *loves* me—
And I wait.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A SHELF OF RECENT BOOKS

THE AUTHOR OF "LONDON LYRICS"

By Henry Litchfield West

THE impression which "London Lyrics" leaves upon the mind is that the writer was always gay and debonair, laughing gaily under blue skies. The verses are so light and charming, so tinctured with delicious humor, that it is difficult to realize that Sir Frederick Locker-Lampson suffered intensely from dyspepsia. More than this, we have the authority of his son-in-law for the statement that "Locker was a man of low spirits", constantly depressed and restless. It is equally surprising to learn —so fluently did the rhymes flow from his pen—that he was "by the calibre of his mind cut off from fecundity as an author". It has always been inexplicable that Locker's verse should all be included in one volume; nor is the assertion that "his output was of necessity doomed to be both small and slight" entirely satisfactory. He wrote, apparently, with delightful ease and imparted a sense, now shown to be without foundation, of absolute, inexhaustible resource. It seems far more in keeping with the impression conveyed by his work, to learn that when he was a clerk in the office of the First Lord of the Admiralty, he "could amuse his easily-amused chief with rhyming epistles on the occurrences of official life".

There is a certain characteristic in *vers de société* which is difficult to describe but which leaves upon the mind a distinct sense of enjoyment. Leigh Hunt, with all his intellectual insight, failed to express this quality in adequate terms, because his felicitation to Locker upon "your fresh and gallant manner" is sadly inappropriate. Hunt was equally wide of the mark, also, when he suggested to Locker that he "make a more serious, continued effort". The Pegasus which Locker rode was not a dray-horse; it was hardly a quadruped at all; and, if a steed, was winged and soared gaily through the empyrean. Oliver Wendell Holmes, as was perhaps natural, showed keener appreciation. "You play with most of your subjects," he wrote to Locker, "in an off-hand, easy way, touching the guitar, one might say, not banging on the keys of the great organ." John Ruskin, whose skill in the use of words is still the envy of less gifted mortals, quite properly appraised Locker's verses for "their quaintness, rightness and tender playfulness"; while Robert Browning's massive mind was "much pleased and a little inspired".

It has been a long time since "London Lyrics" first appeared, but none the less this intimate and accurate character sketch of their author has a genuine interest and value. The charm of Locker's verses—and the same might be said of Praed—seems evanescent, but experience demonstrates

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that it does not diminish with the passing years.

Frederick Locker-Lampson. A character sketch. By his son-in-law, the Right Hon. Augustine Birrell. Charles Scribner's Sons.

WOMEN—AND SHE-DRAGONS

By Theodore Maynard

IF I may permit myself the luxury of making a remark in the modern manner, I would say that women are tolerable only so long as they are irrational. Men will always be puzzled by them, and try to save their own faces by making epigrams or jokes about their wives, which the wives will endure with that enigmatic tolerance extended by women to masculine folly or stupidity. One of these epigrams was made by one of the cleverest men who ever lived, George Meredith, when he said, "Woman will be the last thing civilized by man". It was one of the most foolish sentences that have come from the human heart. For wise men know that women will never be civilized; and they do not want them to be civilized.

Unfortunately there are not a great number of wise men in the world, none at all events upon the British War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry, from whose report Mrs. Hartley quotes:

> It is desirable that women's wide employment should be made permanent. . . On piecework a woman will always beat a man. . . On mass production she will come first every time. . . Men will never stand the monotony of a fast repetition job like women; they will not stand by a machine, pressing all their lives, but a woman will.

This is what the world has come to understand by civilization. And that is why it is highly undesirable that women's wide employment should not be made permanent.

I quote this passage at the outset because it is the heresy which underlies nine-tenths of our feminist propaganda. The general upshot of it all is that women are to be tamed for the factory; and they can only be tamed for the factory by being made dissatisfied with the home. In justice to Mrs. Hartley I must admit that in the earlier part of "Women's Wild Oats" she argues for the home as against the factory. But the second half of her book is a defense of all the things which tend to break up the home—divorce, the recognition of "honourable sexual relationships outside of marriage", and the separation of children from their parents.

Even in Mrs. Hartley's early chapters the hysterical note in her "womanly womanliness" led me to expect that it would not last. Trifles such as the sight of girls walking arm-in-arm with soldiers in the London streets on Armistice Day, and the fact that English women smoke and spend too much money on clothes, shocked her so much, that I felt sure I would soon find her advocating far more shocking things. I did. She appeared as the champion not only of divorce by consent, but of temporary unions outside of marriage designed for the convenience of people who do not feel inclined to accept the risks of marriage.

Mrs. Hartley is much more irrational than any woman has the right to be. Simply to take her own argument: if divorce can be obtained by consent, what need is there for impermanent extra-matrimonial associations? Marriage would in that case be as incidental an affair as the most callous libertine could wish. Nevertheless Mrs. Hartley italicizes her axiom that marriage is a discipline,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not an experiment—and ten pages further on we find her trying to make it as "experimental" as free love! Her logic bewilders my poor masculine mind!

I do not of course demand that she should accept the Christian doctrine that marriage is a sacrament. I do not even ask her to accept the fantastic notion that a promise made, a vow taken "for better, for worse", is binding upon the honor of the contracting parties. But I earnestly warn her against the mistake of thinking that the divorce laws of England (or of America for that matter) are a reflection of the church's opinion. England is a Christian country only in theory. I can offer her a definite assurance on that point. I am an Englishman, and I am a Christian. So I know what I am talking about.

The trouble with both Mrs. Hartley and Madame Marx is that they carefully pick their hard cases, and then proceed to argue from the particular to the universal. There are many curious similarities between these two women. They are both hysterical. And "curiouser and curiouser", as Alice said, they both have Jewish connections. Mrs. Hartley is not a Jewess, but she is married to a Jew, and loses no opportunity of falling back on Judaism when she gets herself into a difficulty—a mean course of action, since she does not hesitate to throw Judaism over when it becomes a nuisance. And one gathers from the publisher's circulars that Magdeleine Marx has all the unorthodox—I said *unorthodox*—Jews in Europe lisping their plaudits behind her Juggernaut car as it passes in its triumphal progress over the bodies of her successive lovers. I do not deduce anything from the fact; I note it and pass on to a consideration of "Woman".

Magdeleine Marx writes in the dot-and-dash style which is supposed to be the sign of intellectual superiority. If you don't know how it is done, I had better explain that it goes something like this:

> "No . . . . yesterday? . . . . Perhaps it may be tomorrow."
>
> Her bosom heaved like the slow rhythm of the sea. He blew his nose . . . .
>
> "Listen . . . . How can I tell you? . . . . You wouldn't understand . . . You know all now."

So on for 228 pages. But I would be the last person to deny that Madame Marx can write cleverly and on occasion even with beauty.

The plot of "Woman" is made up from the commonplaces of the "emancipation" theme. The unnamed heroine, who is, we must suppose, Magdeleine Marx herself, discovers that she is beautiful (the publisher's puff lays great stress on the author's "lovely pale face and fine thin lips, just not prim and just not bitter") and feels an inner urge to escape from her respectable home. So she goes out into the world, and takes a room in the inevitable Bohemian boarding house with its inevitable mystical Russians, one of whom is endowed with an "agile, insinuating body" and the appropriate name of Mania. Magdeleine goes into a shop or factory (it is not clear which) to work; and longs for someone to whom she can talk about herself. She meets him; takes him out for a walk; and then just as he is going to say goodby addresses him thus:

> "Listen. I have been thinking. Don't let us part again. Never. It is I who am asking you. Let us live together . . . I cannot say anything else, that sums up everything, it is everything, to live together. Is it love? . . . I don't know yet . . . But I know we ought to live together, and you, you know it too."

The wretched man marries her, and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is condemned thenceforth to listen to her unending monologue.

To talk of oneself! That enigmatic, incomplete, elusive, warm thing, tossed by conflicting currents, adding to itself constantly, this thing that one is. To say what it is! . . . . To tell of it with modest lips, with lids raised, with voice sure, with silence . . . .

In the intervals between her one-sided conversations, she has a baby and then provides herself with a lover who is a married man. But being a garrulous person she tells her husband about her lover. She explains the state of affairs to him, and though he is in a position to be described by a virile, Shakespearian word, he takes it all as a matter of course.

"Since he came, if you only knew, I love you more. Not only do I feel your smile and your whole presence around me like a thousand arms and with even more than one heart, but I feel surer of myself, nobler—and admit it—more beautiful . . . . To go to him is to continue myself; it is not to lessen you."

After this husband and wife grow more truly spiritual—or is it more smug?—until the war breaks out. The two husbands go to the front; she writes to them both each day—until she hears to her great distress that her real husband has been killed. She consoles herself, however, with the reflection that the second man is still alive.

I called to the vision and welcomed it. My life was not dead, and my heart was open and there was still a man to love me . . .

This cheerful thought was destroyed by the news that her lover also had been killed. But still the heroic Magdeleine was not downcast unduly:

Somewhere in the world tonight there are faces lying dormant for me, persons to whom I have things to say. I am waiting for them, I stretch my arms out to them, I know that they will come because of my need for embraces, a desire for caresses, so strong tonight that I jump up with a start. It is as if half my body were missing. I see myself deserted and frightfully widowed, and my mouth quivers with hunger and thirst for another mouth. I know a man is on the way.

Dozen probably! But one man, he who writes these words, must be excused if he answers the invitation with shouts of coarse laughter.

Women's Wild Oats. By C. Gasquoine Hartley. Frederick A. Stokes Co.
Woman. By Magdeleine Marx. Thomas Seltzer.

AN UNCONVENTIONAL APOSTLE

By Oscar L. Joseph

BETWEEN the years 1829 and 1912 a life of surpassing fruitfulness was lived in England, which exercised a worldwide influence bringing benefits to many thousands in the submerged strata of society. The organization known as the Salvation Army was founded in 1878 by William Booth. This leader and his associates scandalized polite circles by their "corybantic Christianity". But the criticisms of the cultured, the suspicions of the elite, the hostilities of the masses, only conspired to incite these adventurous pioneers to continue their campaign to the ends of the earth. The subtle opposition of religious and irreligious alike furnished the background for the light which shone upon the surrounding darkness from this band of heroic men and women, who were passionately consecrated to the Christian uplift of humanity.

The tables were turned in an unusual way and the translation from abuse to honor makes the career of William Booth one of the picturesque romances of modern times. In 1904

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he was received by Edward VII and the king asked him, "Tell me, General, how do you now get on with the churches? What is their attitude toward you?" He shrewdly replied, not without a touch of humor, "Sir, they imitate me".

Indeed, the social message now being stressed by the churches was largely the result of the awakening by the Salvation Army. After the storm and stress period, when it became an established agency of social and spiritual redemption, dignitaries vied with one another in praising this disinterested man. He received the freedom of the City of London in 1905, and two years later the honorary degree of D.C.L. from Oxford University. In his tours throughout Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia, and Asia, he received ovations worthy of his signal leadership.

The record of his life is set forth on a generous scale by Mr. Begbie. He draws largely from the diaries, letters, conversations, and addresses of General Booth, who is thus made to speak for himself. Special mention is made of Catherine Mumford, his wife. This woman of the finest culture and the noblest Christian spirit, was the inspiring genius of this noteworthy movement. The story of these two elect people—their struggles in raising a family while inaugurating and advancing the greatest revival movement of modern times with little cash and less support—is one of the marvels of history.

If General Booth was an autocrat, he was a genial and generous one. Those who found fault with him on this score knew little of the psychology of leadership. When it is remembered that he had to create sentiment in the face of enmity, to organize the enthusiasm he aroused lest it evaporate in mere emotionalism, to direct the ever-increasing activities of his organization in harmony with his ideals of self-denying service, we can well excuse his domineering ways, which were always inspired by the unselfish passion of the noblest altruism. This has been characteristic of all great leaders such as Paul, Luther, Knox, Cromwell, Wesley. But Booth was behind none of them in valiant and chivalrous devotion, and these two volumes will take a permanent place in the literature of human relief.

The Life of General William Booth, The Founder of The Salvation Army. By Harold Begbie. Two volumes. The Macmillan Co.

LUCK ON THE WING

By Charles Hanson Towne

THERE is still a prejudice against war books. Coningsby Dawson recently wrote, and wisely, that it was a crime for publishers to feel this prejudice, and keep from the public the very stories that would prove most valuable—authentic records of men who, busy at the perilous game of fighting, were too occupied to sit down and write until the great game was done.

Major Elmer Haslett has written, in "Luck on the Wing", just the kind of book we need, now that we all have some perspective—though little, I admit—on the war. It is full of the fire and fervor of youth, good-natured, natural—a splendid picture of the fighting airman and the life he led behind, over, and beyond the lines. There is no affectation here, no strain-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing for dramatic effects; yet one senses the drama of the tale in every line, and I defy anyone to pick it up without finishing it. The best thing one can say of a book is that it is fine to read in bed—as I read this. I forgot the hour, and my lamp remained burning for most of the night. I simply couldn't put the volume down.

The author records at the very outset how he preferred the clean air to the rat-haunted trenches, and it was that human desire to escape from the muddy, disagreeable ground that made him become a flying man. I am glad he left the infantry, for if he hadn't we would not have had this volume—one of the best the war has brought forth.

His opening anecdote of how he flaunted himself in the face of seven Hun ships, without knowing they were the enemy, is enchantingly told. There is no vainglory, only a delicious appreciation of the situation after he came back to earth and was greeted for his heroism by the enthusiastic French. And he was sport enough to blow to a glorious dinner that night, with red wine and champagne!

The book reads more like a novel than the record of a warrior. There is an engaging chapter on a certain girl called Eileen, and here again Major Haslett is not afraid to confess that the joke is decidedly on him. Indeed, all through his story he accents this point. A happy writer he is, and there should be other work from his gifted pen.

I have said it is a fine book to read in bed; I can go even further and add that it is also a corking book to read aloud. Get it, and read it to someone.

Luck on the Wing. By Elmer Haslett. E. P. Dutton and Co.

MEMOIRS OF EUGENIE

By Joseph Wood Krutch

A RECENT writer remarked that the reputation of Napoleon III was improving. Frankly, we were not aware that his stock was either rising or falling, for we thought that it had been taken off the exchange. To us he seemed deader than Rameses II (he has had no cigarette named after him), and the Third Republic of no more practical significance than the Nineteenth Dynasty. It is upon our premise that the Empress Eugénie becomes a fascinating and romantic figure. Were the world which she represents not dead beyond revival, one might contemplate her fate with satisfaction, and rejoice that she who, in spite of personal attractiveness, concentrated in herself so much of what was evil in the old statecraft, was deprived long ago of the power of doing ill. But regard her as the representative of a world too remote to be feared, and she becomes as fascinating, almost, as Marie Antoinette.

There is romance in the story of this girl who raised herself from comparative obscurity to a glittering throne through force of will and a borrowed bon mot—"the way to my boudoir lies through the church"—which magically metamorphosed Napoleon's desire for an amour into a proposal of marriage. Seated upon the throne, she played the bloody game of European politics, and there is romance in her fall as in her rise, for when circumstance deprived her of her imperial husband and of her heir, she spent the long closing years of her life in partial blindness and comparative obscurity, where the memory of her past grandeur was no more than a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vanished dream, and she was crowned only with sorrow's crown of sorrow, the memory of happier things.

Yes, there is romance in all this, but he who hopes to find it in the two volumes of the "Memoirs of the Empress Eugénie" will be disappointed. What are we to say of a writer who omits both the drama of her rise and the pathos of her closing years, who robs the history of all its picturesque character and concentrates his attention upon her official routine? What are we to say of him? We are to say, of course, that he is an "official" biographer and that, as such, is so anxious to present nothing which will detract from an impression of perfect propriety and dull royal respectability, that he has deprived her of all character.

"The king," wrote Daisy Ashford, "wore a small but costly crown",—and the reader of these memoirs will find no equally piquant bit in the endless descriptions of what dresses the Empress, and what jewels the Emperor, wore at this or that ball or levee. From the endless accounts of her official tours and visits one gets about as much insight into royal character as was secured by those crowds who recently crushed themselves into unconsciousness in an attempt to see the Prince of Wales. Cat-like we look at a king and come away none the wiser. In the case of those whose only claim to prominence is the accident of birth, such memoirs are inevitable, but it is really too bad to make Eugénie as much a nonentity as any puppet-Empress. The effect of the narrative is to reduce a fascinating figure to utter commonplace and eliminate all the glamour which might naturally be expected to invest a heroine of romance.

A fair idea of the spiritual level of the anecdotes related might be gathered from the elaborate account of the fact that a certain military gentleman dreamed that he was being murdered and cried out in his sleep. Eugénie, says the writer, was much delighted with this incident. We can only hope that his readers will be as easily amused as the Empress.

Memoirs of the Empress Eugénie. Edited by Comte Fleury. D. Appleton and Co.

THE WILD WEST AND "BUFFALO BILL"

By John Bunker

THE trouble with most readers nowadays is that they have read too much and experienced too little, with the result that they approach a book through a fog of literary sophistication in which all their reactions are abnormal and awry. Moreover, it is perfectly true that one takes away from a book exactly what one brings to it. These things being so, how,—if you have never as a boy (supposing you *were* a boy) smoked corn-silk cigarettes in the back lot or hankered for a gun or chased pirates on the Spanish Main,—how can you expect to get the requisite thrill from the exploits of such characters as Diamond Dick, Jr. or Old Cap Collier or Frank Merriwell or the other sublime heroes of juvenile romance? It can't be done; your education has been sadly mismanaged, and you might as well go back to the morbidities of Freud and Havelock Ellis and Samuel Butler and the other prophets of our sick generation. As for ourselves we prefer the healthier activities of Jesse James and the Biddle Brothers.

So with the account of the career of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

William Frederick Cody, "Buffalo Bill". Here we have the life story of a man of action, a man with natural gifts of hand and eye, who shot straight and rode superbly and took daring chances as a matter of course; a man, too, who, as the phrase goes, was "all man", with a booming voice (there is frequent mention of this trait throughout the book), great simplicity, love of adventure, fundamental courage, and a sense of humor which if primitive at times—(witness his sending his wife by express and without warning a box containing the tuft of a newly scalped Indian!—she fainted dead away at the sight)—was at any rate in keeping with his environment.

Cody's education in hardship began at the age of seven as a member of a pioneering western family moving in hostile country; and he killed his first Indian when only eleven years old. Thence we follow him through his different phases—as private in the army, pony-express rider, "bull-whacker", army Indian scout, scout for the Kansas Pacific Railroad (it was in this employment he acquired his sobriquet, being hired by the railroad contractors to furnish twelve buffaloes a day to feed the laborers), back in the army again scouting in various Indian campaigns, dispatch-bearer, and finally chief of army scouts with the rank of colonel. About this time he fell in with Elmo Judson, the novelist ("Ned Buntline"), who induced him to go on the stage in a series of extravagant western dramas, and from these it was only a step to his Wild West Show and his tour of the globe and world-wide fame.

Being the man he was, frank, brave, kind, and generous, Cody naturally had the power of winning and holding friends, and these "Memories" are a noble record of them—running from "Wild Bill" Hickok to Johnny Baker, "the champion trick rifle shot of the world". But the most enduring and touching friendship of all was the devotion to him of Major John M. Burke, his press representative, who in half a century of whole-hearted service and admiration could never be induced by reporters to talk on any other subject but Colonel Cody, least of all on himself, and who died only six weeks after the death of his chief. The book under review may not be a literary masterpiece, but it has a merit which many so-called literary masterpieces lack—the merit of presenting a real man and an admirable character. It is written in a lively and entertaining style, with restraint, and in good taste, and it has the full value of an authentic human document concerning one whose career was peculiarly American.

Memories of Buffalo Bill. By his Wife. D. Appleton and Co.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LOOKING AHEAD WITH THE PUBLISHERS

THE appearance next month of the remaining essays and journal entries of the late W. N. P. Barbellion may clear up the mystery surrounding the identity of that ill-fated young man. It will be remembered that "The Journal of a Disappointed Man" was accredited by many reviewers to H. G. Wells, who wrote the introduction, and few readers placed any faith in the book's authenticity. It is now open to anyone who reads "Enjoying Life, and Other Literary Remains", to refer to the magazines in which several of the essays appeared—surely a simple and prosaic method of uncovering the man behind the pseudonym. I, for one, am glad to find that such a man existed. What bombast the Journal would have been otherwise! Its beautiful passages, its pæans of joy and pages of dark despair would have been an insult to the intelligence without the basis of actuality. Incontroversial proof of Barbellion's existence, of his tragic death by creeping paralysis, irrevocably adds another journal of self-chroniclings to literature.

Barbellion was a connoisseur—a collector — of sensations, impressions. His insatiable desire for knowledge led him to attempt one day a complete reading of the Encyclopædia Britannica; the next found him greedily devouring a room full of miscellaneous periodicals; the third he spent on the seashore envying the gulls. He wanted to "be everyone, do everything, go everywhere". With remarkable insight he says of himself: "Like a little London gamin, I run about the great city of the mind, and hang on behind the big motor lorries of thought."

The temptation to quote from "Enjoying life" is almost overwhelming. But I yield only for this one, leaving the rest for others to discover. Under the date of June, 1914, he writes:

> I once sought refuge in a deserted country churchyard, where the grave-stones stood higgledy-piggledy among the long grass, their inscriptions almost obliterated by moss and time. "Here," said I, "it will be cold and lifeless and I can rest." I wanted to be miserable, dull, and unresponsive. With difficulty I read an inscription expressing the sorrow of a father and mother in 1701 for the loss of their beautiful daughter Joan, aged 21. I read others, but the most pathetic barely amused me. I was satisfactorily indifferent. These people, I said sardonically, had lived and suffered so long ago that even their sorrows were petrified. Parents' grief in 1701 is simply a piece of palæontology. So I passed on, content to be unmolested, thinking I had escaped. But beside the old graves were a few recent ones with fresh flowers upon them; across the road in the schoolroom the children began to sing, and up at the farm, I then recalled, the old folk, Mr. and Mrs. Brooks, were waiting for the call; all of them beneath the shadow of the church tower whose clock-face watched the generations come and go and come again to lie beneath the shadow of the yews. I saw the procession of human life, generation after generation, pass through the village down through the ages, and though all had been silent before, I heard now the roar of existence sweeping through the churchyard as loudly as in Piccadilly.

"Enjoying Life, and Other Literary Remains" will be published by George H. Doran Company late in September.

* * * *

W. L. George has added his name to the long list of English authors who

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

prefer lecturing in America to hunting in Africa. According to recent news from England he will appear among us before September first. I understand furthermore that in preparation for his tour he is studying American history with the diligence shown ordinarily by presidential aspirants alone; the Civil War, Free Silver and the Dingley Tariff are given as samples of the subjects on which he is already an authority. Literary footlights had better look up these relics of days gone by as a measure of preparedness. Incidentally, in referring to "Who's Who" they may be surprised to find that W. L. George gives his recreation as: *Self-Advertisement.*

Harper and Brothers will soon publish this visiting author's latest, "Caliban". This story made a great appeal to me. In skeleton but the rise of a poor boy to be England's greatest of newspaper publishers, yet the characterization is so deft, so true to itself, the conclusion so inevitable that I could swear it is far from being entirely fiction. Mr. George's people—they *are* people, not characters—live and breathe and suffer and quarrel and do what they shouldn't in complete accord with the probabilities. No one, thank the Lord, is either too good or too bad to be utterly human. Richard Bulmer, the story's Caliban, provokes a mingling of respect and anger, admiration and pity. His is a child's mind, with its genius of knowing what the mob wanted to know before anyone else. With his tremendous enthusiasms, his charm and his coarseness, he is the most lifelike of them all.

* * * *

"He knew that when that kiss ended, he meant to kill Charles ..." He did that very thing, too, and the girl who was the recipient of that fatal kiss served a prison term rather than tell who committed the murder. For she loved the other man, you see—or perhaps you don't see. I confess it was a little confusing to me—this kissing Charles when she loved Julian; it was hard to become used to the idea.

"Belonging" by Olive Wadsley (Dodd, Mead and Company) is written in the same high key in which the Barrymores played "The Jest". Lots of people will doubtless enjoy its succession of tense moments, its murder, its passion, its very unreality. On the stage and starring the Barrymores, I might too, but merely as a vehicle for faultless acting. Miss Wadsley would appeal to me more if she didn't construe interest to mean LOVE and plot to mean ACTION.

* * * *

Those who have come close to what seemed certain death say that their whole life flashed by in a moment—forgotten events, faces and places, in a final burst of recollection. How infinitely more appalling it must be to look back from the "death" of life imprisonment, recalling, wondering, regretting!

Two years ago Charles E. Chapin killed his wife. Worried over financial difficulties, in a state of nervous collapse and temporary insanity, he shot her while she slept, "to save her from poverty and disgrace". No one knows why he didn't kill himself as he had intended. Now the story of his life, like a voice from the beyond, comes to us from Sing Sing Prison—his life as it has passed through his mind during the long days and longer nights. As an autobiography "Charles E. Chapin's Story" (G. P. Putnam's Sons) is unusually interesting—the story of contemporary New York as told by a newspaper man into whose hands came first news of every happening. Of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

course, the tragedy at its climax casts a shadow over the recollection of his whole life; the bitterness of his final failure dwarfs all his victories. His many friends will be glad to find in Chapin's story neither attempt at justification nor appeal to pity. He is evidently too much a man for that.

* * * *

The publication by Henry Holt and Company of another posthumous novel by William De Morgan brings up again the question as to whether or not it is entirely fair to the author to issue such "fragments". Not that "The Old Man's Youth" is a fragment in the real sense of the word—it has twenty-four complete chapters—but it is without that final necessary revision which gives a finished piece of work its lights and shades, and without any ending; the final chapters and several pages throughout the volume finished by Mrs. De Morgan help out with the continuity. Ordinarily I don't think it fair. In this case I am inclined to believe that such publication is worth while. Disappointing as "The Old Man's Youth" may be to those who vividly recall "Joseph Vance", incomplete though it is, the story like a mirror's fragment nevertheless reflects the writer's dominant personality. It is pleasantly reminiscent in style, it has the charm which men of age and experience can throw over the rambling events of years gone by. Surely these facts alone justify the appearance in book form of what is virtually De Morgan's "youth". Henry Watterson accomplishes the same end, though in a different fashion, in his autobiography. De Morgan it is who looks out at us from the pages of this forgotten manuscript, not De Morgan at his best to be sure, but a likeness worthy for all that to stand with his other work as a final chapter to the literature of an era that is past.

—S. M. R.

QUEST

BY JOHN R. C. PEYTON

A BIRD flew out of the forest of my heart,
A wild young bird.
It flew to you and brought me back a song
I'd never heard.

Ah wonder-bird! At dawn it sought again
The same wild track.
At nightfall—mute, with blood-drops on its wings,
It fluttered back.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FICTION IN DEMAND AT PUBLIC LIBRARIES

COMPILED BY FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE IN COOPERATION WITH THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

The following lists of books in demand in July in the public libraries of the United States have been compiled from reports made by two hundred representative libraries, in every section of the country and in cities of all sizes down to ten thousand population. The order of choice is as stated by the librarians.

NEW YORK AND NEW ENGLAND STATES

1. The Portygee	*Joseph C. Lincoln*	APPLETON
2. Mary Marie	*Eleanor H. Porter*	HOUGHTON
3. The Man of the Forest	*Zane Grey*	HARPER
4. Kindred of the Dust	*Peter B. Kyne*	COSMOPOLITAN
5. The Great Impersonation	*E. Phillips Oppenheim*	LITTLE, BROWN
6. The Rescue	*Joseph Conrad*	DOUBLEDAY

SOUTH ATLANTIC STATES

1. The Man of the Forest	*Zane Grey*	HARPER
2. The Portygee	*Joseph C. Lincoln*	APPLETON
3. Mary Marie	*Eleanor H. Porter*	HOUGHTON
4. The Great Impersonation	*E. Phillips Oppenheim*	LITTLE, BROWN
5. Red and Black	*Grace S. Richmond*	DOUBLEDAY
6. The Great Desire	*Alexander Black*	HARPER

NORTH CENTRAL STATES

1. The Man of the Forest	*Zane Grey*	HARPER
2. This Side of Paradise	*F. Scott Fitzgerald*	SCRIBNER
3. The Rescue	*Joseph Conrad*	DOUBLEDAY
4. September	*Frank Swinnerton*	DORAN
5. The Portygee	*Joseph C. Lincoln*	APPLETON
6. The Great Impersonation	*E. Phillips Oppenheim*	LITTLE, BROWN

SOUTH CENTRAL STATES

1. The Man of the Forest	*Zane Grey*	HARPER
2. Mary Marie	*Eleanor H. Porter*	HOUGHTON
3. Kindred of the Dust	*Peter B. Kyne*	COSMOPOLITAN
4. The Portygee	*Joseph C. Lincoln*	APPLETON
5. This Side of Paradise	*F. Scott Fitzgerald*	SCRIBNER
6. The Worldlings	*Leonard Merrick*	DUTTON

WESTERN STATES

1. The Portygee	*Joseph C. Lincoln*	APPLETON
2. The Man of the Forest	*Zane Grey*	HARPER
3. Mary Marie	*Eleanor H. Porter*	HOUGHTON
4. The Great Impersonation	*E. Phillips Oppenheim*	LITTLE, BROWN
5. Kindred of the Dust	*Peter B. Kyne*	COSMOPOLITAN
6. The Great Desire	*Alexander Black*	HARPER

FOR THE WHOLE UNITED STATES

1. The Man of the Forest	*Zane Grey*	HARPER
2. The Portygee	*Joseph C. Lincoln*	APPLETON
3. Mary Marie	*Eleanor H. Porter*	HOUGHTON
4. The Great Impersonation	*E. Phillips Oppenheim*	LITTLE, BROWN
5. Kindred of the Dust	*Peter B. Kyne*	COSMOPOLITAN
6. The Rescue	*Joseph Conrad*	DOUBLEDAY

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

GENERAL BOOKS IN DEMAND AT PUBLIC LIBRARIES

COMPILED BY FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE IN COOPERATION WITH THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

The titles have been scored by the simple process of giving each a credit of six for each time it appears as first choice, and so down to a score of one for each time it appears in sixth place. The total score for each section and for the whole country determines the order of choice in the table herewith.

NEW YORK AND NEW ENGLAND STATES

1. The Economic Consequences of the Peace	*John Maynard Keynes*	HARCOURT
2. Now It Can Be Told	*Philip Gibbs*	HARPER
3. White Shadows in the South Seas	*Frederick O'Brien*	CENTURY
4. The Education of Henry Adams	*Henry Adams*	HOUGHTON
5. Letters of Henry James	*Percy Lubbock*	SCRIBNER
6. Theodore Roosevelt's Letters to His Children	*Joseph Bucklin Bishop*	SCRIBNER

SOUTH ATLANTIC STATES

1. Now It Can Be Told	*Philip Gibbs*	HARPER
2. White Shadows in the South Seas	*Frederick O'Brien*	CENTURY
3. The Economic Consequences of the Peace	*John Maynard Keynes*	HARCOURT
4. What Every Woman Knows	*J. M. Barrie*	SCRIBNER
5. An American Idyll	*Cornelia S. Parker*	ATLANTIC
6. The Education of Henry Adams	*Henry Adams*	HOUGHTON

NORTH CENTRAL STATES

1. An American Idyll	*Cornelia S. Parker*	ATLANTIC
2. The Economic Consequences of the Peace	*John Maynard Keynes*	HARCOURT
3. Now It Can Be Told	*Philip Gibbs*	HARPER
4. White Shadows in the South Seas	*Frederick O'Brien*	CENTURY
5. The Education of Henry Adams	*Henry Adams*	HOUGHTON
6. The Inside Story of the Peace Conference	*E. J. Dillon*	HARPER

SOUTH CENTRAL STATES

1. White Shadows in the South Seas	*Frederick O'Brien*	CENTURY
2. Now It Can Be Told	*Philip Gibbs*	HARPER
3. An American Idyll	*Cornelia S. Parker*	ATLANTIC
4. The Economic Consequences of the Peace	*John Maynard Keynes*	HARCOURT
5. The Education of Henry Adams	*Henry Adams*	HOUGHTON
6. Darkwater	*W. E. B. Du Bois*	HARCOURT

WESTERN STATES

1. White Shadows in the South Seas	*Frederick O'Brien*	CENTURY
2. The Economic Consequences of the Peace	*John Maynard Keynes*	HARCOURT
3. Now It Can Be Told	*Philip Gibbs*	HARPER
4. The Education of Henry Adams	*Henry Adams*	HOUGHTON
5. An American Idyll	*Cornelia S. Parker*	ATLANTIC
6. The Inside Story of the Peace Conference	*E. J. Dillon*	HARPER

FOR THE WHOLE UNITED STATES

1. The Economic Consequences of the Peace	*John Maynard Keynes*	HARCOURT
2. White Shadows in the South Seas	*Frederick O'Brien*	CENTURY
3. Now It Can Be Told	*Philip Gibbs*	HARPER
4. The Education of Henry Adams	*Henry Adams*	HOUGHTON
5. Theodore Roosevelt's Letters to His Children	*Joseph Bucklin Bishop*	SCRIBNER
6. Letters of Henry James	*Percy Lubbock*	SCRIBNER

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE GOSSIP SHOP

THE article by Dr. Maurice Francis Egan in this issue of THE BOOKMAN shows that diplomat and man of letters in a new light. It is evident that his mind is not altogether engrossed with grave international problems and that there is a less serious side to literature than the discussions in which he has been wont to participate. Perhaps, however, it is a mistake to deprecate the importance of books on eating. The world, and, incidentally, our digestions, have been made better by these contributions and surely there is as much wisdom in acquiring the knowledge which is in cook books as in studying the ancient classics.

Dr. Egan writes with such appreciation and confidence and displays such a wide acquaintance with his subject that it seems hypercritical to call his attention to a serious omission. There is no finer example of epicurean literature, if it may be so called, than Mrs. Joseph Pennell's "The Feasts of Autolycus". The opening essay, "On the Virtue of Gluttony",—wherein we are told that "gluttony is ranked with the deadly sins; it should be honored among the cardinal virtues",—is an appropriate introduction to a series of the most delightful observations on "The Subtle Sandwich", "The Most Excellent Oyster", "The Triumphant Tomato", "The Incomparable Onion", and a score of kindred subjects. Every chapter is a prose poem, every sentence a rhapsody. The fact that "life consists of eating and drinking" is unblushingly asserted, and even "love dwindles in importance when there is question of dinner or breakfast". The tribute to bouillabaisse is a provocation to visit Marseilles and partake of that delectable dish. "Its color is an inspiration to the painter, the subtlety of its flavour a text to the poet." Surely Dr. Egan's collection of books on eating lacks its *chef d'œuvre* if Mrs. Pennell's "The Feasts of Autolycus" is missing.

And who was Autolycus? He is the vagrant pedler in "The Winter's Tale" who had a "pugging tooth". If at first blush this seems to indicate an epicurean taste, the impression is misleading because "pugging" means a propensity for thieving. The original title of Mrs. Pennell's articles, "The Wares of Autolycus", seems more appropriate. Shakespeare, however, puts one line in the mouth of Autolycus which interprets his character: "For a quart of ale is a dish for a king." Alas! that we are now denied this delight. And when Mrs. Pennell, in semi-serious fashion, discusses whether hock or burgundy or champagne is the best wine to accompany a certain dish, we sigh in deep regret for the days that are no more.

It is a far cry from the pleasant environments of the readers of the Gossip Shop to the dismal interior of a State prison. The contrast is vividly emphasized by the receipt of a letter from Convict No. 37,611, who asks that he be placed upon the complimentary mailing list of THE BOOKMAN "that the dark hours of my soli-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tude may be brightened by the magazine so dear to me."

The epistle, written in a strong business-like hand, stimulates the imagination. Under what circumstances could an inmate of a penitentiary have learned to appreciate and love THE BOOKMAN, and what irony of fate led him from the pleasant paths of a lover of literature into his present predicament? It is to be regretted that the high cost of printing and paper forbids compliance with his request; but it is at least pleasant to know that a sample copy has been sent to spread what Matthew Arnold would call the gospel of sweetness and light into the gloomy corners of his cell.

Mr. Kipling at the mercy of American hotel profiteers, is a predicament described by an English newspaper—a story not included among his amusing American reminiscences set down in "Letters of Travel" recently published:

When Mr. Kipling was in America, he left his baggage at a hotel, and though he wrote and wrote for it, it never came. He then called at the hotel himself and asked forcibly why they had not replied to his letters. Whereupon they said: "Reply? Why should we? Your autographs are worth about a hundred dollars each."

Lloyd George—more than ever the cynosure of American eyes since the publication here of his biography by Harold Spender—has, it seems, a literary double. The other day the American publishers of the standard edition of Hawthorne received a request from a distinguished member of the British parliament for an engraving of the Hawthorne portrait frontispiece. It was, said the correspondent, for a special purpose. Another letter told the purpose of the picture. It was framed and presented to Lloyd George, who has been, writes the M. P., much impressed by the resemblance as shown by the portrait between Mr. Hawthorne and the Prime Minister. Perhaps the stormy petrel of Puritanism has a spiritual prototype in this modern rider of tempests and master of storms.

It is rather an interesting commentary upon literary values that although the Empress Eugénie, living in retirement, had practically disappeared from the world, her death has occasioned a number of books dealing with her career and personality. Apparently, also, there is now a genuine curiosity to learn the details of her life. This desire will be gratified by the volumes which have already appeared, but more are yet to come, as, for instance, "Empress Eugénie in Exile", by Agnes Carey, which will be published in New York in November. The story of the manuscript of this book is peculiarly interesting. Mrs. Carey now lives in Boston, but she is English and in the early 'eighties was at home in England. She was then Agnes Whiteside, unmarried and in her twenties. The Empress had come to Farnborough Hill for a long stay, and with her were two Spanish girls, cousins. Believing that they ought to have the companionship of someone younger than herself, she invited Miss Whiteside to live with her and her cousins for a number of months. It was through this relationship that the young Englishwoman participated in Eugénie's visit to Queen Victoria on the Isle of Wight.

Mrs. Carey was in the habit of writing to her grandmother every day and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of keeping a diary. She was tremendously impressed by the Empress, and she wrote down her words while they were still fresh in her memory, though at the time she was not thinking of a book. Upon the death of Queen Victoria an article for "The Century Magazine" was suggested on Eugénie's Isle of Wight visit by Richard Watson Gilder, and the idea of a book was developed. The manuscript of the book has been in hand several years, being held until the death of the Empress. It was not set in type, however, and it has had the advantage of a thorough rereading by the author before finally being printed. It is not a formal biography but a chatty narrative of Eugénie's reminiscences and her characterizations of the eminent and interesting persons with whom she had come in contact. The book is full of quotations in Eugénie's own words.

For those who, like the Gossip Shop, adore autobiographies, there is much consolation in the fact that Lord Fisher before he died, and while still in the full possession of his faculties, gave his memoirs to the world. The fact is that every man who plays such a commanding part in the world as Lord Fisher, owes a double duty to mankind—first, to do his stunt as well and wisely as he can and, second, to so set down the events and lessons of his career that those who come after him may permanently profit. Happily, Lord Fisher rendered this double duty in full measure. How well he served his country is a matter of grateful history; and the appeal of his written message is evidenced by the fact that it is being read as widely in this country as in England.

It is, perhaps, the highest tribute to Lord Fisher to say that he is remembered not alone because of his great achievements but because he was so genuinely human. He possessed in unusual degree what Emerson called the saving grace of humor; and his wit was as clever as it was clean. Trivial, maybe, is the story which he tells in his book of his spontaneous tribute to Queen Alexandra, recently printed in THE BOOKMAN, and yet it certainly deserves to become as classic as the episode of Sir Walter Raleigh and the cloak. It illustrates the subtle manner in which great men jest with queens.

The Caravan Bookshop touring New England has now achieved the screen: housewives with heads out of the windows, townspeople gathered around, Henry Irving Dodge telling the children stories, and all the rest of it.

A recent article in THE BOOKMAN, wherein it was stated that the dark horseman of the Golden West is fading from our literature, and that his departure is coincident with the disappearance of the slouch hat, leads an editorial writer in the Oakland (California) "Tribune" to pay a tribute to a type of headcovering which has played no small part in song and story. It is true, as the writer observes, that the slouch hat went west with the frontier. If anything, it is indigenous to the south. In cosmopolitan Washington this particular kind of hat is indicative of southern birth and habits; and many public men, like Senator Vardaman, of Mississippi, Senator Overman, of North Carolina, and former Senator Joseph Weldon Bailey, of Texas, adhere with almost reverential tenacity to this relic of bygone times. The west, however, has no apologies either for the slouch hat or its wearer. The latter was brave and courageous, even if unconventional, and "his sensible, utilitarian"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

headpiece "is still worn by honest men who work in places where the follies of fashion and the affectations of fops do not make the honorable, romantic, empire-building slouch hat too conspicuous". The tribute is not undeserved; and if the passing of the slouch hat means inanity, artificiality and triviality in our literature, we shall organize a League for the Preservation of the Slouch Hat, urge all our authors to join, and thus keep forever alive those picturesque and pungent qualities which made the western pioneers a bold and sturdy race.

C. K. S., in his literary letter in the London "Sphere", expresses a doubt concerning the authenticity of an article entitled "Woman's Lot, by the author of Jane Eyre", which appeared in "The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine" in 1856, two years after Miss Brontë's death. The contribution has been heralded as a "find" which has escaped the bibliographers. "I do not believe," remarks C. K. S., "that Miss Brontë ever sent that article to a magazine, but that it was in all probability ingeniously pieced together by some enterprising journalist, and that the editor was imposed upon. I cannot agree with Mrs. Chadwick that Charlotte Brontë was in the habit of sending out articles to newspapers and magazines before she became a successful novelist. I find evidence in the correspondence that Branwell did this, but not his sister. After Mrs. Gaskell's famous 'Life' appeared there were many forged Brontë documents circulated. I have seen a letter from Paris signed 'C. B.', although she never visited that city. I have seen articles offered in the sale rooms which were obvious forgeries. We know now pretty well everything Miss Brontë wrote. All her manuscripts have been preserved."

"I change my cane as the gun fires," "Dizzy" wrote from Gibraltar in 1830. "It is wonderful the effect these magnificent wands produce. I owe to them even more attention than to my being the supposed author of—what is it? I forget." He was as great a dandy as Pope's

> Sir Plume of amber snuff-box justly vain,
> And the nice conduct of a clouded cane.

He once took Lady Georgiana Peel out to dinner (she recalls in her recently published "Recollections") in a linen shirt-front backed with pink satin which showed through—but then cannot genius wear whatever it chooses?

The chronicle of this fascinating figure exhaustively set forth in six volumes, "The Life and Correspondence of Benjamin Disraeli", is finally concluded by George Earle Buckle, who abandoned the editorship of the London "Times" to undertake the work.

Percy MacKaye, in accepting the fellowship created for him by Miami University, at Oxford, Ohio, is the first poet to be thus honored by an American college, and it may be that a new precedent for literary life in America is thus being established by the college founded in 1809.

Mr. MacKaye is to give no instruction in the university, although he will have the salary of a professor, and is to have a house furnished by the college. His duties will be simply to live in the village and to produce at will what plays and pageants he cares to bring out. The university is about to build for him a little work room or studio among the trees of the virgin

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

beech woods of the Lower Campus, and here, before the wide fireplace which Mr. MacKaye has stipulated must form a part of the structure, it is expected that the poet will write some of his best work. As is well known, he is very much interested in birds. Here he will live in the centre of a bird sanctuary filled with thrushes, cardinals, orioles, jays, etc., and in the fields right in back of the house where the family will live, there are meadowlarks, quail, and song sparrows in abundance.

This is not the first literary association to be connected with the name of Miami University. The old McGuffey's School Readers that many will remember from childhood were edited here, on a table which is still preserved in the library of the college. It was octagonal and had eight drawers, one for each of the eight years in the McGuffey series. Whitelaw Reid received his education at Miami University, and at one time David Swing was a member of the faculty.

Two volumes of reminiscences that furnish an interesting contrast in point of view are the Memoirs of the late Empress Eugénie and those of Princess Pauline von Metternich, granddaughter and daughter-in-law of the Chancellor. The latter book, recently published in Vienna, bears the title "Geschehenes, Gesehenes, Erlebtes". The first chapter is devoted to a sketch of Metternich in the pleasing rôle of grandfather. Subsequent recollections conjure up a picture of social life at the Austrian capital in the middle of the nineteenth century.

To turn from modern to mediæval times, there is a new biography, by Jean-H. Mariéjol, of "Catherine de Médicis", based upon her correspondence. The author's contention is that the Queen's political intrigues were prompted by a deep maternal passion.

A new story of W. S. Gilbert, of "Mikado" and "Pinafore" fame, is told in Horace Hutchinson's "Portraits of the Eighties", recently published. Once, when a group of his friends were condemning and ridiculing a certain actor's impersonation of Hamlet, Gilbert attempted to introduce a little Christian charity into the criticism. "Oh, I don't think his Hamlet is so bad," he remarked, and then he added: "It's funny, without being vulgar."

A robust and picturesque personality disappeared when William Marion Reedy passed into the beyond. He was in many respects a genius—in the originality of his ideas, the gift of unique expression, the aptitude for discerning real literary merit. Reedy's "Mirror" was what its name implied; it was Reedy and it was a true reflection of his inmost soul. In fact, it contained so much of his voluminous output that it had little room for other contributions, but this expression of his individuality was the feature which made the publication successful.

It is true that Mr. Reedy was not famous in the accepted sense of the word, but it is doubtful whether this fact caused him any concern. With a keen sense of humor, he declined to take himself too seriously, although sincere enough in his convictions. He will be remembered not alone for his own work but because he was the discoverer of Fannie Hurst and Edgar Lee Masters, as well as the generous helper of authors not so well known. His unselfish interest in developing latent talent was typical of his whole-souled nature.

The monument of accomplishment

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which stands to his credit is, unfortunately, not of a permanent character. He dealt with the passing event; and while he invested it with the charm of his unique comment, his work was of a day and for the day. Nevertheless, he has left a distinct impression and there does not seem to be anyone who can exactly fill his vacant niche.

A bookstore has been opened by Nicholas L. Brown on Lexington Avenue in New York City, in the room in which Chester A. Arthur took the oath of office when he became President of the United States on the death of Garfield. The house occupied by the late F. Hopkinson Smith at 150 East 34th Street, also in New York City, has become a tea-room. The study in which the engineer-painter-novelist wrote his delightful stories is decorated in Venetian style as a tribute to his memory.

"Pussyfoot" Johnson, with only one eye, may not see the world as plainly as when his sight was perfect, but the world is seeing him with more distinctness than ever before. The "ragging" which he received in London made him famous overnight, wherefore the story of his life, published by a New York house, has an interest which it could not otherwise hope to attain. It seems, however, that he used to be a government agent engaged in preventing and suppressing the sale of alcoholic liquors on Indian reservations, so that his London experience was only one incident in a colorful career.

Mr. Johnson, since his return to America, is writing "An Encyclopædia of Alcohol" of which he says: "There are going to be five volumes, and they are going to contain everything there is to know about booze, from the time Adam and Eve did not spoil good apples by making cider, until the birth and death of the Bronx cocktail." By the way, his real name is William Eugene Johnson.

In Pleasantville, New York, lives Gilbert Shepard, whom a strange irony of fate deflected from the paths of the Transcendentalists to the wholesale lumber trade, with a strong avocative interest in solitaire. Why, one queries, did he not become an author or at worst a biographer? One evening lately, sitting with his neighbor Arthur L. Drew, his eye fell upon a photograph of Shakespeare's home at Stratford, and it was easy to see he had stepped on the tail of a troublesome, jumpy idea.

"Shakespeare's house used to be a favorite view on the stereoscope," he remarked, lifting his head as he resumed his seat and relieving the congestion of his chins. "I remember that Oliver Wendell Holmes used to come into the store...."

"What was that?" Mr. Drew asked, sitting up straight. (This is Mr. Drew's own story as he told it to the Gossip Shop.)

"When I was a boy, I used to work in a store in Boston, on Washington street," said Mr. Shepard. "Mr. Bates owned it. Dr. Holmes and Ralph Waldo Emerson used to come into the store. So did Whittier and Longfellow. Well, Dr. Holmes would visit the place because he was interested in stereoscopes. The earliest form of the stereoscope was a big box with lenses in it. Dr. Holmes noticed that the lenses were not always adapted to the eyes of the person who used the box. He conceived the idea of putting the lenses on one end of a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

little stick and the picture on the other. You could make the picture slide toward the lenses at will, so that you could get the proper focus.

"Mr. Bates made all sorts of novelties, and so he turned out a lot of these new stereoscopes at Dr. Holmes's suggestion. They were good sellers, I remember. Mr. Bates, however, added an improvement of his own devising, in the shape of a shade for the eyes. He had seen people put one hand over the eyes when looking at the pictures. Dr. Holmes wrote an article for one of the magazines, telling all about the improved stereoscopes and where they could be bought, but without giving Mr. Bates any credit for his share in the work. That was something I did not like about Dr. Holmes. He seemed pretty sharp when it came to looking out for Oliver Wendell. That was the Yankee of it, I suppose."

For the space of three minutes or longer, Mr. Bates's boy mused upon the "cuteness" of Oliver Wendell Holmes and the more ingenuous mind of his old master.

"But a very clever man, I must say," resumed Mr. Bates's boy, referring to Dr. Holmes. "He was busy with all sorts of scientific ideas in those days, and had stopped practising medicine when I knew him.

"Emerson often came into the shop. He always had a pleasant word for me, patted me on the shoulder, and wanted to know how I was getting along. One day he ran in when it was raining. He needed an umbrella, but he couldn't remember the right word. He stood in the middle of the store with one arm rigid in the air and the other working up and down alongside it until we realized that he was imitating an umbrella in the raising.

"Mr. Bates was secretary of that Massachusetts society for encouraging arts and sciences, which had been founded by Paul Revere. That was how he came to know Emerson, Whittier, Longfellow, and the rest of those fine old men. They used to drop in upon him and discuss the proceedings of the society. There would be an exhibition every year. On one occasion they had a typewriter on view. It was run like a sewing machine: you worked it with your feet and hands. Mark Twain came up and bought it."

A word or two about the kind old Quaker of Haverhill, and Mr. Bates's boy went on to talk about Wendell Phillips, Senator Sumner, and Carl Schurz, whom he had heard making speeches on Boston Common. But it was late in the evening before he had started talking about his old friends Emerson and Holmes, and soon he departed in the direction of home, without having done much more than lift a corner of the curtain which death has woven around our Transcendentalists.

Belgium is about to establish an Academy of Letters, presumably on the model of the French Academy. A commentator in the "Mercure de France" expresses the hope that the new institution will devote its energies, not to reforming the dictionary, but rather to procuring for authors paper on which to print their books. For Belgium, as well as France, is at the moment suffering acutely from the paper shortage.

Italy, on the other hand, appears to be unmoved by the present crisis. Those magazines which were published before the war are still flourishing, and to them have been added a host of new periodicals. The various publishing houses are bringing forth

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a great number of books, in particular works of the younger writers.

All the great book forces of the country—librarians, booksellers, publishers, Boy Scout Headquarters—are working together in a nation-wide campaign to make Children's Book Week, November 15-20, 1920, mean "More Books in the Home".

Children are insatiable readers. They form half of the public library borrowers. They delight in owning their own books. Parents and teachers are more keenly interested than ever before in the influence of reading on children. Through public lectures, display in stores and libraries, posters and other means, the best books for children will be brought before the people during the week of November 15th.

Librarians and booksellers in every town will be back of Children's Book Week which has headquarters at 334 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

We welcome a friendly gossip-shopper from California who writes as follows:

Dear Gossip:

I read with interest in THE BOOKMAN for July Mr. Joseph I. C. Clarke's recital of his adventure in "Conradese" wherein he intimates that the author of "The Judgment of Vulcan" was unduly influenced by Conrad's "Victory". It is good to know that Mr. Clarke slept comfortably after satisfying himself that the author of the "Vulcan" story was an imitator. Let us hope he had pleasant dreams.

When I saw the "puffing" passage in "Victory", I wondered where I had read it before. Soon I recollected. Théophile Gautier in "Arria Marcella":

"The cone of Vesuvius, furrowed with striæ of blue, rosy, and violet-hued lavas, towered sharply defined in the background.... The volcano, being that day in a good humor, smoked his pipe peacefully."

According to Ford Madox Hueffer, Conrad thinks in Polish, expresses his thoughts more formally to himself in French, and then renders his thus-worded French thoughts and "images" into English. To know French, Conrad must have read much in it, and why not of Gautier? It is a simple matter for a master to change day into night and shift from a pipe to a cigar.

Perhaps Mr. Clarke will admit that Conrad holds no patent on puffing volcanoes.

G. G. F.

The story referred to—Gautier's "Arria Marcella"—is in "One of Cleopatra's Nights", translated by Lafcadio Hearn and brought out by a New York firm several years ago.

Sylvester Baxter, while lately hibernating for his health's sake in San Juan, Porto Rico, had some pleasant contacts with Spanish authors. Among these he tells of the eminent Spanish poet and novelist, Francisco Villaespesa, who has thirty volumes of verse to his credit, besides several novels. Mr. Baxter, who is at present busy on a forthcoming book of verse, writes the Gossip Shop about a Spanish tribute to Mr. Howells:

"In a letter just received from Palacio Valdés, the eminent Spanish author writes most feelingly of the death of William D. Howells, saying:

You cannot conceive the sadness of the impression made by the receipt of the newspaper you sent me announcing the death of our great friend, Mr. Howells. I had not heard of his illness, and he seemed to me a man capable of living a hundred years. He was an old friend whom I had known for something like thirty years by correspondence, and also personally since we passed several days together in Madrid. You may well believe that for me his death means a great loss. I owe to him many favors and good counsels. Both morally and intellectually he was a great man; and the United States owes him the homage of a statue.

"In this connection it seems worth noting how it chanced to be my fortune to be the instrument that brought to pass the friendship between the two men of letters. While living in the City of Mexico in 1883-84 my friend Charles L. Seeger (the father of Alan Seeger, the poet) showed me a copy of Palacio Valdés's delightful novel, 'Marta and Maria'. I was so pleased

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with it that I bought a copy; on my return to Boston I lent it to Mr. Howells who made it the subject of one of his Editor's Study articles in 'Harper's Monthly'. That was the beginning of the interest outside of Spain in the work of Palacio Valdés; translations of his novels soon began to appear in nearly all the leading languages of Europe. This proved a material factor in making the excellence of modern Spanish literature in general known to the world at large—an appreciation lately culminating in the phenomenal vogue of Blasco Ibáñez."

Champ Clark, former Speaker of the House of Representatives, in his book, "My Quarter Century of American Politics", published not long ago, writes as interestingly as he talks—which is saying a great deal, for he long has been a star on the lecture circuit. His platform work is far more remunerative, in fact, than his salary as a Congressman. The Gossip Shop recalls once interrupting Mr. Clark in the doleful task of figuring his financial loss when a summer session of Congress prevented his appearance under the Chautauqua tents.

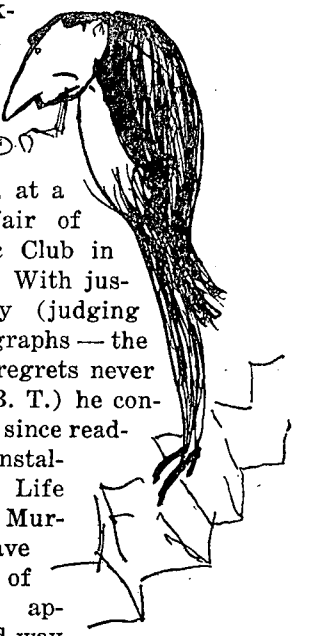
A distinguished Major of the Red Cross just back from the Far East is said to have the courage to tell the following story on himself:

Overdue for an important appointment one very rainy day on the Champs Elysées, he found himself competing with an attractive woman for the only available taxi. Discovering that their routes overlapped, they agreed to share the conveyance.

"I am Mrs. Rinehart", the stranger introduced herself pleasantly.

"Err-er, let me see," reflected the major; "haven't you written something?"

Here is Mr. Tarkington's own "sketch of his outwards" (seen through the eyes of the incorrigible Murray Hill in the July BOOKMAN) as he stands on a stairway, blowing rings between dances, at a full-dress affair of the Dramatic Club in Indianapolis. With justifiable vanity (judging from photographs — the Gossip Shop regrets never having seen B. T.) he confesses: "Ever since reading the first instalment of the Life and Times of Murray Hill I have been thinking of my personal appearance—bad way to occupy the mind. The trouble is, when I read one of these insults, my *real* beauty vanishes before the violence of the author's imaginings: mirrors (also befuddled) reveal me no better. *With that beak of his looking like some huge and curious bird out of the Bronx zoo*—I haven't been able to see anything else for two days."



The Dickens anniversary with its usual round of artillery from the English press has come and gone. Of the notables who spoke for publication (among whom were G. K. C. and Rebecca West) only one called Dickens an "*unpopular* immortal". Miss West (a new novel from whom, by the way, is expected to appear soon in New York) in a lecture to the Woman's Freedom League throws the spot-light of the modern feminist on Dickens's women;

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At one time, no doubt, there was justification for calling woman capricious, emotional, and generally tiresome, but the indictment is no longer a fair one. To put it frankly, I think we are much wiser than our grandmothers. We are no longer balked or denied the opportunity to express ourselves. It was a real terror of women that led Dickens into enthusiasm over semi-idiots like Dora, and Thackeray into the creation of a "vegetable" like Amelia.

To this sentiment William Archer retorts in "The Dickensian":

Surely Miss West cannot have read "David Copperfield" since her childhood. Dora is satirically drawn from first to last, and she is killed off because she is manifestly unfit to live. It is true that of such women Dickens had a real terror, and I am much mistaken if he had not personal reasons for that emotion as had Sir Walter Scott before him.

"Roads to Childhood", by Annie Carroll Moore, Supervisor of Work with Children at the New York Public Library, is a fall publication. It includes the series of articles on children and their books which have recently appeared in THE BOOKMAN, and other informing essays.

Irvin Cobb, like many another notable character, belongs to the nation, but none the less does Paducah, Kentucky, claim him for her own. When his familiar form bulks largely on the station platform—sometimes oozing perspiration from every pore and sometimes wrapped in the glory of a fur coat—his friends assemble to welcome him and outline a program of entertainment worthy of the occasion. In summer there is golf and a symposium on the club porch; and in winter a succession of dinner parties and an adventurous expedition for coons and possums amid the jungles of the lower Tennessee river. A certain sequel to these hunting trips, according to the local historians, is a forest fire. They say that it starts regularly and directly from the nearly-consumed and still burning perfectos with which Cob literally blazes the devious trail.

The genius of Cobb does not thrive upon nectar and ambrosia. He loves the substantial things of life. These are always of the Kentucky sort, cooked in the Kentucky way—beans and cornbread and hog's jowl; turnip greens and sorghum molasses and "lightbread"; sweet potatoes and onions and cabbages, and a ponderous pudding of raisins and plums and other mysteries concealed within its steaming sides. And often there is a huge cake, and some special dish of rare concoction. Then is Cobb happy. In the seclusion of his mother's home, and under the dependable security of her jealous and affectionate eye, he goes over the top with fixed bayonet in the shape of a knife and fork and wreaks catastrophe in the enemy's lines.

Not so very long ago the local pride of Paducah was sadly shocked by a statement made by Lorado Taft, of Chicago, an artist and a sculptor. Mr. Taft insisted that the city of Cobb's nativity had erected a monument to an individual who had never existed, viz., Old Paduke. Irvin Cobb's hot southern blood boiled, his love for the little Kentucky town surged into indignation, and he smote Mr. Taft, both hip and thigh. Mr. Taft later apologized and he and Irvin Cobb made a special trip down to Fifth street and Broadway to stand under the shadow of the old Indian and shake hands. So, to commemorate the occasion, Cobb's friends always make him walk over to the statue and pose for his picture. It is an annual occurrence. And after the photographer is satisfied, they take off their hats and give three cheers for

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Old Paduke and Irvin Cobb, and then the Boy Scouts come over and wash off the monument with pails of water and scrub brushes to make it clean and white. Somehow it has never occurred to them to use their scrub brushes on Cobb, who had as much to do with the affair as the redskin.

Recently, in an article on "Old Cap Collier" and some of his library associates in paper binding, Cobb referred to "a certain barn loft in a certain Kentucky town". It was in this loft that Cobb as a boy first became acquainted with Nick Carter and began telling the stories which have since made him famous. The barn is still there, and sometimes Cobb goes over to look at it again; whereupon the perennial suggestion that the structure be preserved for its historic memories finds its way into the local press.

A curious link between those two inimical spirits, Dickens and Poe, is the revived "English Notes" by Quarles Quickens, lately issued in a limited reprint by a New York publisher. The book is sponsored by Joseph Jackson (the Dickens collector) of the Philadelphia "Ledger", whose introduction carries the burden of proof that the work is Poe's answer to "American Notes"; and by George Sargent, who takes for granted the rejoinder is Poe's though not at his best —Poe often here "shooting butterflies with bird shot". So this "untidy item", this unclaimed stepchild of a wayward father, is at length brought into the fold—the bookmaker has killed the fatted calf (not literally, for the book is jacketed in a luxuriant moss-green paper to invite family reunion with your Poe set).

To what base uses may the ouija board descend! Its latest function is that of adjunct to the publicity department of a publishing house. If the "Rileyesque" stanza lately purporting to be the work of the Hoosier bard really hail from the afterland, he has certainly deteriorated.

The French Academy prize-winning novel of the year, Pierre Benoit's "Atlantida"—reviewed in the February number of THE BOOKMAN—has just been published on this side. The setting of the story reflects with extraordinary color the author's experience as army officer in Northern Africa. The original of the heroine, the "enspelling" Antinea, is Cleopatra Selene —daughter of Mark Antony and Cleopatra—whose pyramid still stands in north Africa. This story is a spellbinder, in the Rider Haggard tradition.

Walter A. Dyer, a frequent contributor to THE BOOKMAN and a rabid New Englander, has written a novel, "Sons of Liberty: a Story of the Life and Times of Paul Revere", to be published next month. This is Mr. Dyer's thirteenth published book, but he says he is not superstitious.

Australia is keeping a clever eye on American books and authors through the medium of a literary review, "The Book Lover", which comes each month straight as a crow flies to the Gossip Shop. In the current issue there is a reference to that "dramatic prophet, Clayton Hamilton"; not to mention a burlesque of "the *legato* opening, à la Fenimore Cooper: 'The sun was setting in a blaze of glory over the western prairie when two horsemen might have been seen....'" Among the Books Received are some two dozen popular here at the moment.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED